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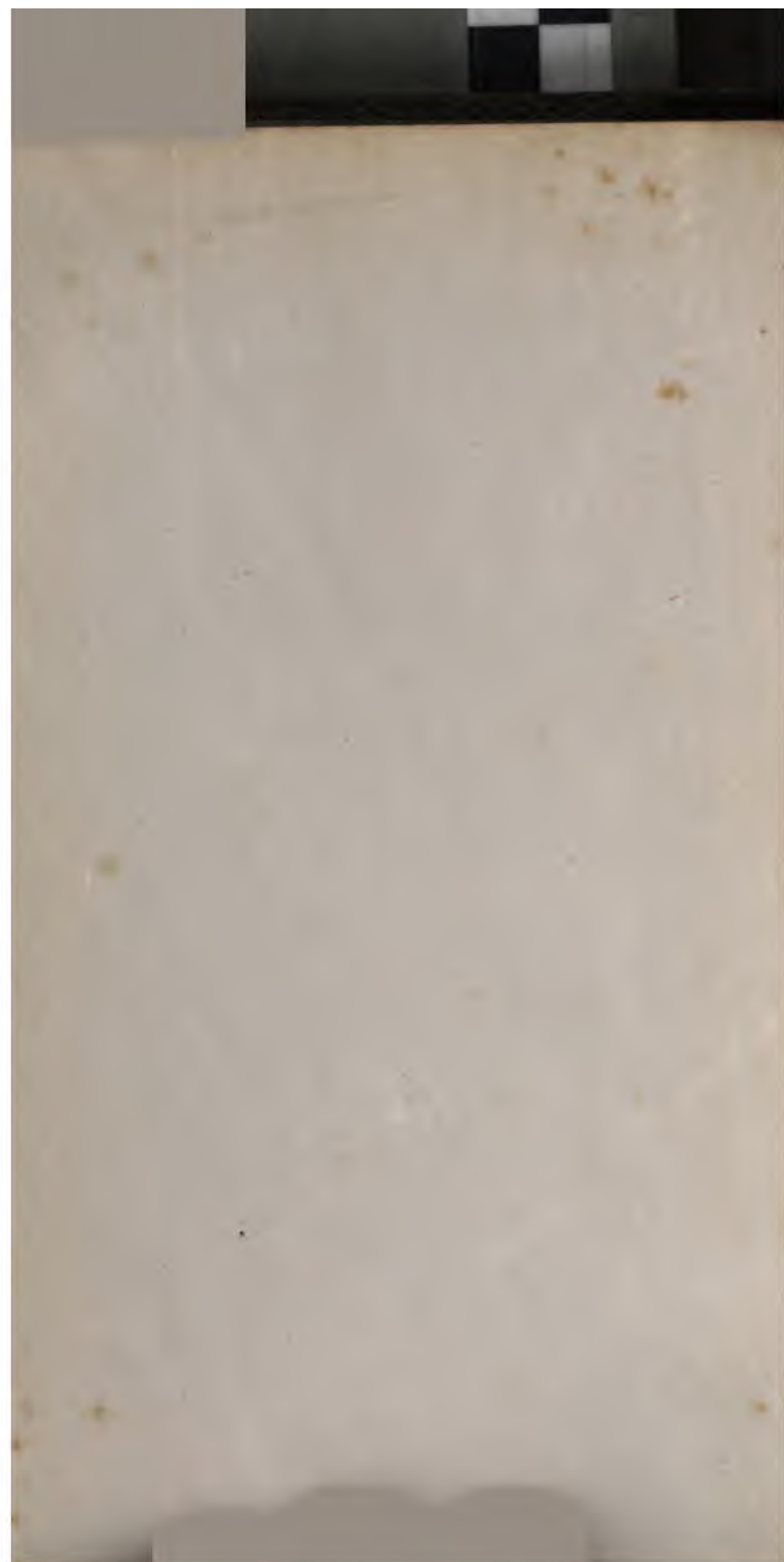
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BELGRAVIA

AN

Illustrated London Magazine

VOL. XXXII.

MARCH to JUNE 1877



London

CHATTO AND WINDUS, PICCADILLY

1877

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LONDON : PRINTED BY
SPOTTISWOODE AND CO., NEW-STREET SQUARE
AND PARLIAMENT STREET

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BELGRAVIA

MARCH 1877.

The World Well Lost.

BY E. LYNN LINTON.

CHAPTER VII.

HIS LATEST CRAZE.

HAD Guy Perceval had a good manner and a fine presence—that is, had he been what an American would have called a magnetic man—he would have been an invaluable possession to the neighbourhood, being the one man at Grantley Bourne who took up new ideas and endeavoured to improve on old methods of living. But as he took up these ideas less wisely than warmly, and rode his hobbies straight against venerated prejudices and time-honoured superstitions, without allowing time for gradual change or growth—and as he was a small man with a thin voice, an ungraceful figure, a bad manner, and a nervous laugh—he gained no honour in his own neighbourhood, but fulfilled the fate accorded to local prophets, and was laughed at in proportion to his zeal and scouted in direct measure with his truth.

The only thing that kept him from absolute social excommunication was, that he was Mr. Perceval of the Manor, owner of a fine old mansion perfumed by a few historical traditions, and possessor of a rent-roll of some fifteen thousand a year. Being so grandly framed, his follies to some, to others his dangerous innovations, were excused in public and laughed at in private; and if he would not have been tolerated for himself alone, for the sake of his surroundings he was welcomed with effusion, according to the way of society and human nature in general.

He was an example in his own person of the worthlessness of intrinsic qualities, and the power possessed by externals. He had zeal and intelligence;—which went for nothing because he was destitute of personal charm; but he had wealth;—and this was the ballast which kept the whole thing from capsizing. He might lay down the lines of a higher law and a wiser method

than any by which the people of Grantley Bourne had yet lived; but if he laid them down in a high-pitched voice, his arm sawing the air like a pump-handle, and his head thrown back so far that his face was foreshortened to a chin and two nostrils, of what good were they to a fastidious generation which demands to be amused if it consents to be taught, and requires to be flattered if it is to be led? The value of plain living and high thinking might be incalculable, but it would have to be demonstrated by a more personable professor than Guy Perceval, and one whose demonstrations would not set your teeth on edge when he made them. And when he advocated scientific arrangements in ventilation, drainage, food, or the like, the people who had never looked to a stuffed chimney nor a waste-pipe, and had cooked and eaten by the light of nature and not according to the teaching of chemical analysis, held him as far gone as man could be whom it was not dangerous to suffer to be at large. They had not died of typhus, neither they nor their forbears; and it was just folly to try to frighten them now with a dust-bin here or a cesspool there. Still, Mr. Perceval was Mr. Perceval, with pretty pickings to dispense among the faithful. Wherefore the poor made up a sham compliance which was the veriest sham possible, and the rich affected intellectual adhesion, but for various causes, always beyond their control, refused to follow on his lead, and left him the barren honour of lonely supremacy in the ways of wisdom.

When he declaimed against the close foliage that made Owlett like a nest, and urged on Mrs. Smith to lay the whole place bare, replanting with pines and blue-gums if she must plant at all, she, who never argued, contented herself with saying quietly:

‘I dare say it would be better, but I have not the heart to do it;’ listening as quietly to a rather bitter discourse on the evil of knowing the better thing and refraining from doing it. Wherein Mr. Perceval was decidedly in the right, but none the more obeyed.

When he talked of the sin of unhealthy marriages, people thought him indelicate to introduce into that question any other considerations but those of love or money; and said that it would be very hard on the poor things who had scrofula or madness in their blood if they were not allowed to marry where they loved; and Mr. Perceval was talking on subjects which he did not understand and had better leave alone. When he made war against such superstitions as, that the poker draws up the fire and the sunlight puts it out—taking these as types—the housekeepers by rule of thumb tossed their heads, and said that practical experience goes farther than scientific theory any day, and that Mr.

Perceval thought himself vastly clever, but they could tell him that others knew better than he did with all his wisdom. When he established a night-school for the ploughboys and hinds, the gentry thought him revolutionary and playing with edged tools which would give him an ugly gash one of these days; and when he gave Sunday afternoon lectures in his library on popular science, and the lives of great men, even the good vicar looked grave, and said that he wished he had not made it Sunday; and every one knew that the vicar never said an ill word when he could say a good one, and that when he whispered grey, other folks might be expected to shout out black. The lectures however did not take. A few of the best, and some of the worst, young men in the place went to them for a short time; but the former were disappointed at the want of doctrine, and the latter at the want of fun. Between the two they came to an ignominious end for lack of listeners, and the neighbourhood was avenged and appeased.

Had Guy been a fine big fellow like Wilfrid Machell for instance, but Wilfrid with enthusiasm and a belief in humanity, or like Arthur—given to causes, not deeds—he would have carried his points victoriously. But a mean-looking little fellow, who has only money and ideas, does not do much in the way of forming a new public opinion in the teeth of the old. Thus it came about that Mr. Perceval, representing wisdom, cried from the housetops in vain, and got no one to listen to him save here and there a private friend, made into a disciple for motives of self-interest.

There was Lady Machell, for instance. She cared nothing for causes, but a great deal for Machells, and would have sold the most cherished tradition of her life for so much money down; but she was one who always showed herself a sympathetic listener, and who adopted such of Mr. Perceval's crazes as she could without expense or too much personal inconvenience. It was only for a time, she thought; when she had him safe as her son-in-law she would put an end to all this folly, and mould him into a more reasonable shape than he had now. His crazes came now from the fact that he had no wife to interest him and no wife's family to direct him. When a wise hand was laid on the reins all would come right: and hers should be that hand.

She had fixed her eyes on him for Hilda; and when Lady Machell had made up her mind, others might as well make up theirs to yield. It had to be done, and a good will makes obedience so much easier. Hitherto however she had cultivated him with the most charming show of disinterested friendship, the most consoling assurance of sincere sympathy with his views and ideas. She was always ready to talk with him on his pet subjects, and she

invariably caressed his ruling craze; and not the wariest fish in the matrimonial waters baited and angled for all round could have seen the faintest flash of her hook, so deftly was it concealed, so skilfully played.

Hilda was still in the schoolroom, and seldom appeared even at afternoon tea; which in general is licensed to include 'buttercups.' Sometimes, but rarely, she came down accompanied by her governess and on her way for her afternoon constitutional; but in general she was strictly hidden and kept out of sight like contraband. Her brothers, when they were at home, were allowed to take her for walks, as a treat; but as a rule she was never seen without her governess—an awful kind of woman who acted as the most admirable duenna; and her reputation for beauty, and what she would be when she came out, stood all the higher for her present careful obscurity.

His best friend—this was what Mr. Perceval called Lady Machell. She was his most sympathetic listener; and he loved her with a really touching devotion; for if he had a restless brain, he had a steady heart, and was as affectionate in nature as he was hobby-horsical in mind. He had tried to interest Mrs. Smith of Owlett, but she only looked and listened and remained unmoved; and though Muriel was softer and more sympathetic, yet she was too young and had no influence. She might be his disciple, but she could not be his coadjutor; and he was looking now for women who would carry out his ideas, not only for girls who would believe in them.

As he drove to-day into the barren weed-grown sweep of Machells he came with a new discovery—the value of oatmeal porridge—milk and oatmeal porridge. The one had forty-nine constituent elements, the other was rich in phosphates. Oatmeal makes bone and muscle; milk gives roundness, a fresh complexion, sweetness of blood. Could porridge be introduced into England as a general article of food the nation would be saved. He came now with a bag of meal and strict directions how the porridge was to be made. He was a man for whom the universe is always new, and whose own last acquirements of knowledge are absolute novelties to every one else. What he had just learned, he thought that no one else knew; but he was liberal with his knowledge and imparted his discoveries freely.

They were all sitting as usual on the garden seat placed against the house, when the Manor dog-cart drove up. By virtue of her brothers' presence Hilda too was there, and her governess was not—the prettiest young girl to be found for miles round; the meeting of brook and river making a perfect bit of present human scenery

with the promise of lovelier things to come ; and as yet unconscious of the charms that she possessed.

Lady Machell received Mr. Perceval in the manner of a favourite guest, with a fine shade of almost maternal tenderness shining like gold on the higher lights of her bearing. Wilfrid, to whom the owner of the Manor was especially distasteful, and always had been from the time when they were boys together, and the dwarf beat the giant in the class-room but was a clumsy little obstruction on the playground, treated him with a coolness which was certainly not polite, seeing what were my lady's designs ; but Arthur, who was sweeter tempered, was better mannered ; and between the two Wilfrid's sourness scarcely counted. As for Sir Gilbert, he was one of those quietly stolid souls who never show love or hate, prejudice or passion, haste or regret, but who meet all the world with the same face, and neither betray when they are bored nor show when they are pleased ; and Hilda thought every man stupid but Derwent Smith. She was in the age of dreams, and Guy Perceval was scarcely the knight whose coming would awaken her.

'What have you in that bag, Mr. Perceval?' asked Lady Machell, after the formalities had been gone through. 'It looks like flour.'

'It is the best stuff in the world,' said Guy Perceval, thrusting the bag at arm's length into Lady Machell's face ; 'makes the best bone and muscle going ; is fuller of nutriment, richer in phosphates than any other food. It is a treasure ; and will be just the thing for Miss Machell. I have brought you some to try.'

'But what is it?' she asked again, pleased that he had singled out Hilda for his especial interest ; not seeing that this was merely on account of her youth, and because he held her as an unformed immaturity who had to be made by food, like a bee in the pupa state, or an infant in the cradle.

'Oatmeal,' said Mr. Perceval. 'For porridge.'

'Oh!' said Lady Machell, who had been in Scotland.

The young men laughed.

'That horrid stuff, mamma?' cried Hilda in dismay, forgetting for a moment the teaching which inculcated silence and submission to the mother's will as the best breeding of the best born.

'It is very wholesome, I believe,' said Lady Machell, ignoring the laughter of her sons and the repugnance of her daughter alike, as she put her delicate fingers into the meal and rubbed the grains with quite a critical air.

'It is salvation,' said Guy. 'If we could get our poor and rich

alike to eat porridge, we should be the finest nation in the world. No more rickety children, no more flabby muscles or gelatinous bones; we should be the most splendid race that has ever lived; and a splendid national physique means national virtue and domination. We are the products of food. By food we may be made with narrow foreheads or broad ones, with dull brains or fine ones. Given good food, we have the like results in digestion, flesh, and intellect. The thing is as sure as a rule-of-three sum.'

'Is that your latest, Perceval?' asked Wilfrid with a sneer. 'When I was last here, I remember that the demoralization of England was in our system of drainage, and that our salvation was to be had by using tanks made after a certain pattern, and a peculiar kind of pipe.'

'The importance of one thing does not destroy that of another,' said Guy Perceval with perfect serenity. He was accustomed to buffets, and took them as part of the burden carried for truth's sake. 'Drainage is as valuable now as it was last year, and a fine food-material does not touch the question of tanks and pipes. Oatmeal is not to supersede hygienic arrangements, but to help.'

'Yes,' said Lady Machell, glad of a word that she could echo and a rope that she could hold by; 'not to supersede, but to help.'

'The Scotch live on oatmeal,' said Wilfrid drily.

'And see what splendid men they are!' Perceval returned.

'Granted; fine brawny fellows enough; but I fancy not all the world before us. There are as good brains out of Scotland as in it; and an English gentleman need not take the odds from a Scotch laird,' was Wilfrid's disdainful rejoinder.

'Weight tells in the long run, and the average weight of the Scottish brain is greater than ours,' said Perceval.

'Good news for the elephants,' returned Wilfrid, with less logic than contempt.

'All reformers are laughed at,' said Perceval stolidly. 'Only do you try my panacea, Lady Machell. I am sure it would do you good, and Miss Hilda too.'

'Don't, Hilda. It will spoil your skin,' said Wilfrid.

'I don't think I should like it; but if mamma likes——' She looked at her mother with dutiful acquiescence, and Guy Perceval smiled in approval.

'Lady Machell will like,' he said in a tone of conviction, not unreasonably acquired. 'Boiled twenty minutes; plenty of salt; and then eaten with cold milk.'

'Thanks; yes, I will certainly try it,' said Lady Machell with admirable self-possession. 'For breakfast, you say?'

'Yes, and supper too, if Miss Hilda takes supper,' he returned,

his face beaming with delight. Truly Lady Machell was the most sensible, the most admirable woman in the world; and the best mother! 'I have just taken some to Owlett, and though Mrs. Smith did not seem to be much moved by my arguments—a very wooden kind of woman that—Miss Smith promised to try it.'

'Oh!' said Lady Machell.

'She looks in such splendid health already,' he went on to say, 'I scarcely could say that she wanted to be improved. But she can try it, and at all events it cannot hurt her. What a beautiful creature she is!' enthusiastically.

Wilfrid frowned and Arthur flushed. Both thought Guy Perceval always disagreeable, but at this moment insufferable; and both longed for five minutes of savage life when they might tell him so.

'Yes, she is a pretty girl enough for those who like that style,' said Lady Machell with well-executed indifference. 'For myself, I prefer something crisper and more compact. Don't you think she is too tall? Those very tall girls are so rarely straight, and never strong.'

'But Miss Smith is as straight as an arrow, and seems to me in magnificent health,' said Guy, looking rather astonished. Muriel's beauty was a public confession in the neighbourhood, and to hint at a twisted spine seemed as strange to him as it would be to an artist were he told that Raffaele was decidedly coarse and had no true sense of beauty.

'Yes, at present; but I do not fancy that any of the Smiths have good constitutions. I always have believed, do you know, that Mr. Smith is in a madhouse.'

Lady Machell said this quite confidentially, but without a sign of faltering.

Guy Perceval changed colour.

'Yes?' he answered, with evident agitation. 'I have never thought of that. Good heavens! if it should be so! A madhouse!—and that boy is certainly a little odd.'

'Very. He always was,' answered my lady quietly.

'Mother!' cried both brothers in a breath.

'What nonsense!' laughed Arthur. 'He is as sane as any of us here.'

'And saner than some,' said Wilfrid, grimly.

'I do not say that he is out of his mind, my dear, but he is certainly odd,' repeated Lady Machell. 'And I should not be surprised to find that my idea is the solution of the mystery.'

Guy Perceval looked thoughtful. The shaft had struck in a tender place, as she meant that it should. Health was the great

goddess whom he worshipped as the mother of all power and virtue; and he had moreover a profound idea as to the value of contrast as well as purity of blood in marriage. Muriel and he were an exact match, through unlikeness. Dark, small, stubbly, wiry himself, his wife should be, as she was, tall, fair, smooth-skinned, soft-haired; placid while he was nervous and excitable; administrative to his power of origination; and with that womanly quality which the world would call devotion, but which he recognized as the 'following power'—whereby they would never come into collision, but be always as Nature intended—he the step in advance, and she dutifully walking in his shadow at his heels. She was his ideal realized. Of all the women known to him, Muriel Smith was the one whom he would wish to choose for his wife. Their physical tendencies would be so admirably counteracted, so beautifully balanced in the children! And then she was so sweet and charming personally. It was such a glorious chance that inclination and scientific fitness should unite at the same point—mark out the same person!

'I am sorry,' he said slowly after a long pause; 'very sorry. She would make a charming wife; but, of course, if that fatal stain is in her blood, she would be impossible for any man of principle who respected humanity too much to commit such a crime against posterity.'

'It is not true. I would wager my existence that it is not!' cried Arthur hotly. 'Madness in their blood? No!'

'You know nothing about it, Arthur,' said Lady Machell, with a sharp glance. 'It is not a crime of which I accuse them, but you must see for yourself that there is something in their history which does not come to the surface; and, as Mr. Perceval says, the young man is decidedly odd.'

'If it is so, it ought to be known,' said Guy slowly. 'However hard on the young people, it is only their manifest duty to society.'

He spoke firmly, but sorrowfully. It was the kind of thing that he would do for his fellow-men, how great soever the cost to him personally; and it was what everyone else ought to do. The advancement of the race was dearer to him than all else, and the perfection of humanity the favourite dream of his life.

All this time Hilda had not spoken, nor shown by face or manner that she took more interest in the conversation than if it had been about the evils of leaden water-pipes, and the unhealthiness of impure gas. But in that active little heart of hers, which she concealed under such a meritorious envelope of quietness and submission, she felt as if she could have strangled Mr. Guy Perceval

with her own two small hands; and never in her life had she gone so near to condemning her mother, whom at all times she feared rather than loved, and obeyed because she must, not because it was her pleasant duty to yield. How good her brothers were for their advocacy of those dear, sweet, charming Smiths, she thought. And yet she knew in her secret soul that, had they dreamed of how much she liked the Smiths, and how she found Derwent her prince among men, they would not have been quite so good, and perhaps would have gone even beyond her mother in dispraise and Guy Perceval in hardness of repudiation.

Showing nothing of these tumultuous troubles within, she sat and did her little duties of smiling when she was spoken to; of patting Brian's head when he laid his big paw in her lap; of playing with the white kitten in her arms; and looking pretty and unconcerned all round. And as no one reads riddles when they are written in hieroglyphics without a key, no one suspected that these nice little duties, performed with such charming simplicity of grace and girlhood, hid anything deeper than the superficial diversion of the moment or served more as a blind than an expression.

'Pray do not go and proclaim throughout the country that the Smiths are all half mad,' said Arthur hurriedly.

'I am as likely to be as tender of them as you,' returned Guy Perceval. 'I admire her too much to harm her.'

Lady Machell's lips narrowed to a thin line. She looked venomous and vicious, for the stake for which she was playing was heavy, and she could not afford to lose it. Still, she was wise and politic, and knew how to pay out her line.

'You mean Miss Smith?—or the mother?' she asked innocently.

'I meant Miss Smith, but I admire the mother too,' said Guy simply.

'They are both charming in their way,' returned Lady Machell; 'the daughter singularly so; but, for all that, were I a man I should not like to marry even such a pretty and amiable young person as Miss Smith, unless I knew more about them than I know now; and especially who, what, and where is the father.'

'Yes, who and where is the father;' echoed Guy with a disturbed air.

'Whoever he is, he is a gentleman; and wherever he is, it is neither a prison nor a madhouse. I would stake my life on that!' cried Arthur with unusual warmth.

Wilfrid's eyes turned to his brother; so did Lady Machell's. This passionate look, this scornful accent, were both so entirely foreign

to his ordinary habits of temper and manner, that it was no wonder if they looked with inquiry and surprise, searching out the motive which spurred him to so extraordinary a display. Like many men of strong will and deep passions, he was good-tempered and not easily roused; with a great deal of surface softness, and always more ready to swim with the stream in unimportant matters than against it. And to see him flame out so hotly on, as it would seem, such a commonplace topic as the personality and whereabouts of an unknown man, was a phenomenon in the family which naturally astounded them.

‘There is a good old bit of advice, Arthur, which you would do well to consider,’ said Sir Gilbert slowly. ‘It is, never to go surety for a stranger, else you will smart for it. I dare say you are right. It is more comfortable to believe good of one’s fellow-creatures than evil; still, in this case, evil and good are both unknown, and one is just as likely as the other.’

‘And another maxim is to hold a man innocent till he has been proved guilty,’ answered Arthur.

Sir Gilbert smiled. He was a slow, heavy kind of man; but he had clear views, and was not foolish.

‘A good legal fiction, my boy; I have nothing to say against it in its proper place as a legal fiction; translated into everyday life, it would be a rather awkward rule to work.’

‘I am surprised to hear this from you, sir,’ Arthur answered, stoutly but not disrespectfully. ‘I have heard you say so often that the man who assumes more evil than is known of another, draws his own portrait, and condemns himself—also that suspicion is the curse of little minds—that I should have expected to find you on my side to-day.’

He smiled. ‘Have I?’ he answered; ‘I dare say; and I was right. But there are exceptions to every rule; and if I were you I would make one in favour of your mother’s insight, and not be quite so ready as you are to endorse this unknown Mr. Smith’s unproved respectability.’

‘Respectability?—yes, I think that he is respectable enough,’ said Guy Perceval; ‘but I confess that Lady Machell’s theory has thrown a new light on the subject to my mind. Mad! That would fit on every side only too well.’

‘It is a cruel thing to say,’ Arthur returned without a sign of yielding. ‘No one has the right to make theories of this kind simply to gratify curiosity. We know nothing of Mr. Smith, and have no right to assume anything. We have not an inch of proof of any kind; and all these guesses are silly or cruel—both.’

'You are severe on your mother, Arthur,' said Lady Machell quietly; but her thin lips quivered.

He laid his hand on her own.

'No, mother, not on you,' he said; 'I am speaking of principles—not persons.'

'Your principles are very like persons,' she answered; 'but let us change the conversation. The truth concerning Mr. Smith can have no real interest for any of us; and whatever he is or may have been cannot possibly touch us in any way. How do your new dairy arrangements answer, Mr. Perceval? Are you as satisfied with them now as in the beginning?'

The diversion was effectual. No more was said of the Smiths; and after Guy had perorated for half an hour on his slate slabs and his glass pans, his patented churns and his machine-made cheeses, he got up and went away, more than ever convinced that Lady Machell was the choicest woman of the place, and his best friend through and through; and feeling that he had performed an important service to society and the future by making her promise again quite solemnly that Miss Hilda's diet should be largely modified by the introduction of oatmeal.

Long before he left however Arthur had strolled off fuming, leaving Wilfrid fuming too for two reasons where his brother had only one. For if this discussion derogatory to the Smiths had been distasteful to him, so had been Arthur's excitement; and he did not like his mother's manner and intentions towards Guy Perceval.

Ready to sacrifice himself for the good of the family, he thought how should he save his little sister; and could he? He despised Guy now as a man as much as he had despised him when a boy; and he was averse from the idea of Hilda's marrying him, even with all their poverty and all his wealth. And yet, fifteen thousand a year and a fine old Elizabethan house perfumed with historical tradition;—might not a few crazes on drainage and ventilation, oatmeal porridge and domestic hygiene generally, be forgiven in favour of such sterling advantages? And if mean-looking and plain, he was generous, good, and kind; and these are the long trumps that win the game in the end! But it went against him, how much soever he reasoned with himself and knocked sentiment on the head with the bludgeon of substantial interest. Hilda was as much like his daughter as his sister, and he felt something of a father's protection for her. He wanted to see her happy with a man of Guy Perceval's possessions and, say, Derwent Smith's personal graces; and this compromise between the two revolted him. He knew however that if his mother had decided on it, it would be done. Lady

Machell, with her theories of womanly submission always admirably marshalled, had known how to establish her own unquestioned supremacy. Sir Gilbert had gradually gone down before her, and so had he, Wilfrid himself. She knew how to guide them all with a thread so silken, a touch so fine, that they never knew the moment when to refuse her hand until they found themselves brought to the point where she had decided they should be led. Her fish were landed before they knew that they were hooked; and when landed, what is the use of floundering? Still, he would try what he could do for Hilda, and see if it were possible to put spokes into the wheel which the lady mother had set a-going.

‘Mother, you are surely not going to dose that poor child with this horrid stuff!’ he said, when Guy had gone and Sir Gilbert had lounged off to the library, and he was left alone with his mother and Hilda.

Hilda looked up at him appealingly, gratefully. She hoped that her mother would be as much afraid of her son as she was of her mother.

‘She must try it,’ said my lady, her lips a trifle set.

‘But why make her unhappy for the whim of that ass?’ he said.

My lady did not look up. She was settling her dress, which was refractory and needed those sharp, short movements of her well-formed hands.

‘I think it would be only good breeding to let her try it,’ she repeated. ‘And it does young people good to accustom them to all things—even to things which they do not like. It makes them plastic and more high-bred.’

‘I am sorry to hear you say so,’ said Wilfrid stiffly.

‘That is your creed too, my dear,’ she answered. ‘Which of us can go through the world with that low-bred self-indulgence which thinks only of personal pleasure? We must all sacrifice ourselves to the higher needs of family and society. And Hilda will not be hurt by being thoroughly grounded in self-control. You feel with me I am sure, Wilfrid, even if you are sorry to see her annoyed.’

‘She is such a child yet—her initiation into pain need not begin so early. She will have abundance of sorrow and annoyance yet in life; we need not make occasions.’

Wilfrid spoke with strange softness. It seemed to him that his own immolation would lose half its value if it did not secure his little sister’s safety.

‘Women cannot begin too early,’ said my lady. ‘The life of a woman is all sacrifice, all self-suppression, from the cradle to the

grave; and we cannot change the law of necessity for one child. If Hilda has no worse trial than to eat a mess of oatmeal now and then, to please an old friend and her mother, she will not have much to complain of; will you do this for me, Hilda?’

‘I will do what you like, mother,’ was the dutiful reply.

‘But you do not like to be fed on porridge, little one, do you?’ asked Wilfrid.

‘No, I do not like it,’ she said; ‘but if mother does?’

‘Habit teaches us everything; and you will get to like it,’ said Lady Machell. ‘And it will please Mr. Perceval.’

‘I do not think Hilda cares much for that; do you, Hilda?’ flashed out Wilfrid.

‘I care more to please mother,’ she answered, with the marvellous tact of a woman, feeling her ground as if by a sixth sense, and knowing exactly what to say to save herself from disgrace.

Lady Machell smiled approvingly. Wilfrid, who could not condemn her obedience, would neither smile nor approve. He was out of humour, consequently unreasonable; and would have preferred to see Hilda recalcitrant rather than submissive. If she had been, he would have rebuked her and taken his mother’s part. Nothing more however was said; and the penance involved in porridge-eating was performed with grace by the well-trained little victim, who swallowed without a wry face what, not having been bred to its liking, was to her the distasteful stuff whereby she was to elaborate bone, muscle, and brain-power. And she thereby proved to her mother, as so often before, how eminently fitted she was to the part that had been assigned her by a merciful providence and the keen insight of an unalterable maternal will.

CHAPTER VIII.

LEFT IN THE DARK.

AFTER this conversation, Guy Perceval determined to make it his business to find out, if he could, where the absent Mr. Smith was living; and if his health were as satisfactory as his morals, his sanity as assured as his status. As we have said, the world at Grantley Bourne had left off troubling itself about Mrs. Smith’s non-resident husband. She had so firmly established her own position and gained her social certificate by her fourteen years of wise walking and blameless behaviour, that the mystery of her proprietor’s non-existence had ceased to interest it. But Lady Machell’s little shaft had awakened in Guy Perceval that formless

suspicion which is more or less dormant in all of us, and more or less ready to be aroused by a breath, shaped by a touch; and it had arrested him in that drifting state of feeling called euphemistically making up one's mind; that state wherein the sole thing wanting for the final decision is—opportunity with a dash of extra excitement. When this is furnished, the process will generally be found complete, and reason and inclination will be declared in accord, no matter how divergent in reality.

Now however, Guy, who was really conscientious and honestly desirous of transacting his life according to principle—translating theory into practice in other matters beside oatmeal-porridge and its phosphates—stood aside, and reflected. The pleasant state of unconscious desire in which he had been so comfortably cradled came to an end, and he halted; considered; knew what he wished; and finally resolved to learn what was wanting to his peace, and, when learnt, then to arrange the rest.

Full of this decision he drove over to Owlett a few days after that talk with Lady Machell, and found, as everyone always did find, that Mrs. Smith was at home.

If Mrs. Smith had a secret—as she had—no one could have betrayed less of its place and name. She was not one of those who whisk before your eyes the fugitive tip of a vanishing mystery, gone as soon as indicated. You cannot see what it is like. It was just the extreme tip that swept like a feather through the air; but you saw enough to know the fact of a mystery, and so far had the trail laid for you. There is a certain pleasure in baffling while exciting curiosity, to which the owners of secrets are greatly given; but Mrs. Smith knew nothing of this hazardous pleasure, and lived with hers closely covered; so closely that not even that tip vanishing and indefinite was ever to be seen playing within her mouth like the Sign given by Owen Meredith. No one had ever caught her at a weak moment or an undefended place; and the cleverest cross-questioner had never penetrated an inch within the forbidden territory. She seemed to be always on guard, always prepared; and those who suspected most were forced to acknowledge that they had no anchoring ground anywhere, and that they were utterly at sea, floating vaguely in the vast ocean of unproved surmise.

Mr. Perceval was determined to-day to surprise what no one had run down. He was full of the theory of madness which answered so well on so many sides that, left to himself, he would have declared quite positively it was so and nothing else. But having a glimmer of rationality and enough justice left in him to draw back in time, he hesitated till he could prove.

‘A friend of mine, to whom I have often spoken of you, Mrs. Smith, has just written to me to say that he knows a certain Mr. Edward Smith ; and asks me if it is your husband.’

He spoke abruptly, suddenly, as one springing a mine ; but she neither started nor changed colour, nor was yet one whit disturbed. She only asked tranquilly :

‘Did you say Mr. Edward Smith?’

‘Yes, Edward,’ he answered briskly. Was he getting hold of that long-hidden clue—striking that cold scent then at last?

‘Where did your friend know this Mr. Edward Smith?’ she asked again.

‘I scarcely know where exactly,’ he answered, with a certain hesitation. If his masked battery was to open fire with a true aim, it would be horribly cruel ;—scarcely up to the old saying of *Noblesse oblige* on which he had once given a Sunday afternoon lecture to three ploughboys and a deaf wheelwright. Still it had to be done. So he steadied his voice and fixed his eyes keenly on the impassive face before him, and said with as careless an air as he could assume :

‘My friend is one of the Commissioners in Lunacy, and said that he had met Mr. Edward Smith when on his rounds. I do not suppose in a professional character,’ he added with a nervous laugh ; ‘excepting perhaps as a coadjutor.’

‘No,’ said Mrs. Smith, quite quietly ; ‘that Mr. Edward Smith cannot possibly be my husband.’

‘I half thought not,’ said Guy drawing a deep breath. His shot and shell had not told. ‘I have always supposed that your husband was abroad.’

‘Yes?’ said Mrs. Smith ; and she said no more.

Guy Perceval was not to be discouraged at the first failure. He did not specially like the task to which he had devoted himself, but it was a matter of importance to him, and he thought his scruples in this case of less moment than his knowledge. If he had fired a blank shot in the first instance—taken a misleading road—he could hark back, and maybe find the right path before he had done, and hit the mark which he had set himself to strike.

‘It must have been something in the shape of an accident, however caused, which has doomed you to this life-long separation,’ he said with softening sympathy.

‘Circumstances are so often our masters,’ returned Mrs. Smith tranquilly.

‘Which scarcely reconciles us to sorrow,’ he said. ‘I hold, as I suppose you know, the belief that most things in life are remedi-

able if we only take the right way—health—happiness—fortune—all these things which we call chance, or fate, I say, are generally within our own power to change or create.’

‘Yes?’ said Mrs. Smith again.

‘Don’t you think so?’ he asked.

‘Some things of course are, but others are not,’ was her safe reply.

‘Such as——’

‘Such as death, for instance,’ she answered, forced into speech; ‘or the obligations of business; or the choice which so many men are called on to make between their home and their profession, like Indian officers, naval men, and so on.’

She paused. It was seldom that she spoke even at such length as this, and only when obliged.

‘No man of such conditions should marry at all,’ said Guy.

‘No? That would be rather a hard law to make,’ she said.

‘A salutary one,’ he answered. ‘The first thing for us to do, if we wish to live well, and to become really civilized, is to stop all unwise marriages. If a family has madness, for instance, in it’—he looked at her narrowly, but she went on working as calmly as before—still went on working quietly, when he added: ‘or any great disgrace;—the younger members ought not to marry. We should soon stamp out disease, and crime is the product of disease, if we could once establish this law. Don’t you agree with me?’

‘It would be useful,’ said Mrs. Smith.

‘It is one of elemental morality—one on which the welfare of nations, the condition of the future of humanity depends,’ was his reply.

‘Surely,’ she said.

‘And extending the principle, no man who is unable to live with his wife and family, should have a wife and family at all!’ continued Guy, becoming warm. ‘The anxiety of the separation is too much for ordinary constitutions, and the health of the whole group suffers.’

‘Too often,’ she said.

‘But that touches you too nearly,’ said Guy, with a ghastly attempt at smiling. His efforts at cork-screwing were not very successful so far, yet, like many other worthy souls, he piqued himself on a property which he did not possess, and being one of the least cunning of men, flattered himself that he was one of the most diplomatic.

‘My health has not suffered,’ she said.

‘You have your compensation in your husband’s success then

—in his well-doing and happiness—such happiness as he can have separated from such a family?’ said Guy. ‘That is so like the sympathetic unselfish nature of a woman!’

Mrs. Smith’s head was slightly bent over her work. Her thread was entangled, and for a moment she was too much preoccupied to speak. It was important that she should make that running perfectly smooth. Then she lifted up her head, but still drew her thread through her white soft fingers, so that she could not look at her companion.

‘Yes,’ she answered in her usual voice, sweet, low, and monotonous, without emphasis or faltering.

‘I congratulate you,’ he said warmly.

She bowed slightly.

‘Thank you,’ was her answer.

‘The honour of the head of the house, the father of a family—nothing can come up to that!’ cried Guy enthusiastically. It was such a relief to find that, so far from this unknown Mr. Smith being tainted with madness, with dishonour, with fault in any form, he was absent on some noble mission, working courageously in some great field, whence he would come some day radiant, and bearing the fruits and spoils of his years! He felt like a boy, glad he scarcely knew why; glad of his life, of the sunshine, of the day and of to-morrow. ‘That is the ideal state of things,’ he continued; ‘the only solid foundation for family happiness and worth.’

‘Yes,’ she said when he paused. She had to say something, and she could not say less.

‘Do you expect your husband home soon?’ he continued. ‘Will he have gained his medal, earned his discharge from the servitude of toil, the treadmill even of success?’ he asked.

‘The date is still uncertain,’ she answered.

‘But he is coming?’

‘Yes; he is coming.’

‘We must give him a welcome when he comes—a real English welcome!’ cried Guy, flinging up his voice.

‘Thank you,’ she answered; neither refusing nor accepting; then, the loophole being opened, she glided through it without either haste or affectation, and said quietly—‘Talking of fêtes, the Brown de Paumelles seem to be arranging one of extreme magnificence on Miss Brown’s coming of age. It promises to be quite an event in the neighbourhood.’

‘And you will not break through your rule and go to it?’ he asked eagerly.

‘My rules are not easily broken through,’ she answered.

‘But Miss Smith?—and your son?’ by the grace of an after-thought.

‘What do you say, Muriel?’ asked Mrs. Smith, with the faintest little sigh of relief as her daughter came into the room with her sweet and happy face full of the joy of love, but knowing nothing yet of its torment; sentiment and conscience in accord together, and passion, fear, and self-reproach, words without meaning to her soul.

‘About what, mamma?’ she asked.

‘The de Paumelle ball. Mr. Perceval was asking me if you and Derwent were going. You are, are you not?’

‘We agreed that we should,’ she answered, shaking hands with Guy, and wondering why he kept hers so long, and held it so closely pressed; his method of shaking hands being, in general, of that flabby kind which allows the companion’s to drop out of the grasp without an effort to retain it.

But he was too happy to-day to be flabby. As he looked at her more critically than he had ever done before, and noted the bloom and softness of her skin, the clearness of her eyes, the freshness of her lips, and how white and shining were her small square teeth, noted too the innocence of her face, and the feminine strength that lay behind its girlish softness, he was angry with Lady Machell and himself, that she should have suggested and he adopted such a monstrous hypothesis as the insanity or doubtful condition anyhow of the father of so exquisite a creature as Muriel Smith.

‘Then I shall have the pleasure of seeing you,’ he said, his face radiant, but none the handsomer for its brightness.

She smiled.

‘I am glad of that,’ she answered simply; and Guy was glad that she said so.

He was the owner of the Manor, and a power in the place; she was only Muriel Smith, with a certain uncomfortable mystery about her father, let kind hearts and unsuspicious minds say what they would. Yet he was as grateful that she expressed herself kindly, and looked at him with her sweet and gracious smile, as if he had been the subordinate and she the royal lady whose favour conferred distinction.

‘May I engage you for the first waltz?’ he said in his high-pitched voice.

Muriel coloured, and for a moment hesitated. Guy Perceval was a good fellow enough, in spite of his crazes, now for blue-gum trees and now for oatmeal-porridge; no one could be found to deny his substantial worth of character, nor to doubt the sharpness, if some might the soundness, of his intellect; but as a dancer, and

above all as a waltzer, he was simply execrable. He slid and he ducked, he hopped and he halted; he trod on his partner's feet and entangled his own in her train; he generally contrived to overset some unlucky couple against whom he cannoned, and not infrequently to overset himself and his luckless lady. His dances were chapters of terror in the book of the evening to the girls whom he engaged; and had he not been Mr. Perceval of the Manor, he would not have found a partner even among the wall-flowers, so utterly atrocious was his style. When therefore he asked poor Muriel, she naturally felt dismayed and disappointed as well. Down in the secret depths she had dedicated this first waltz to Arthur; and have we not spoken of the exaggerated proportions assumed by small matters, when we are in that state of bondage to imagination called being in love? Not to dance that first dance with Arthur Machell was to lose the flower of the evening. But how could she refuse Guy Perceval? She could not say that she was engaged when she was not. She had not those keen and shifty wits which are never at a loss for made-up excuses and reasons why, of more cleverness than truth. To her the truth was the truth, and not to be tampered with, how great soever its cost; and not even to escape from Guy and save herself for Arthur could she frame any of those small white lies which come so glibly from pretty lips when the straight way is disagreeable, and crooked paths are pleasant.

With a distressed look to her mother she began: 'Thank you,' when Mrs. Smith said quietly:

'I have just promised your brother that you should dance the first dance with him, my dear.'

'Oh! a brother is a movable feast. He counts for nothing,' said Guy. 'No; with me, Miss Smith; not with him—with me.'

'But if mamma has promised Derwent—' she said hesitatingly.

'You can give him the second. I must indeed have the first. You must give me the first waltz, the first galop, the first mazurka,' he added, rising in his demands as the consequence of opposition; which was his way. 'I must have the first of all three,' emphatically; 'and your brother and the herd may come in for the rest.'

'You are very kind,' said Muriel, more and more distressed, her eyes still turned appealingly to her mother. 'I do not think I can promise so many to one person.'

'I think you are singling out my daughter for too much attention, Mr. Perceval,' said Mrs. Smith gravely. 'I am not fond of this kind of thing with young girls. It is bad for them in every way.'

'If you think that I could show her honour, I would dance with her all the evening!' exclaimed Guy enthusiastically. Muriel shuddered. 'Pray do not interpose, Mrs. Smith, except in my behalf,' he continued. 'I specially request this; I have reasons.' He came near to her, and said below his breath, so that Muriel should not hear: 'It is to disprove something that I have been told. It is most important, I assure you!'

Mrs. Smith smiled faintly; an acute observer would have said a little contemptuously. It was as if she had said that she, who knew so well the importance of life, was not disposed to accept Guy Perceval's estimate of the value contained in a triad of dances. She, like everyone else at Grantley Bourne, had heard too often of that faculty of his for magnifying molehills into mountains, to be easily impressed with any chart of social Alps which he might present; but with all this, there was an under-current of something that was not contempt—a faint and passing flash of what?—of terror? It was however all so faint and vague, contempt and fear alike, that not even Muriel, who knew her, had detected the passing of the shadow; and to Perceval her face had been absolutely unchanged from the first—so much so that he was half inclined to quarrel with her for her stolidity. She made just a moment's pause before she spoke; then she said:

'You have doubtless some good reason, Mr. Perceval; I will not suppose it a mere young man's whim of the moment; still, it is the kind of thing that I specially dislike. I have a great objection to my daughter being put *en évidence* in any way. My own manner of life must have shown you this before now.'

'For this once,' urged Mr. Perceval with characteristic tenacity. 'Trust my reasons, and let me beseech you not to refuse me.'

Mrs. Smith made one or two stitches in her work with marked care and precision.

'Perhaps I am foolishly sensitive about what is after all a mere trifle,' she said slowly, refilling her needle. 'It is really of so little consequence in any way!'

'Just so,' said Guy in an odd tone of voice, glad to have his will but not much flattered at what was implied in granting it. 'Of no consequence to anyone but me—and to me of all consequence! So, Miss Smith, it is agreed on—the three dances that I have asked for and the first quadrille as well.'

'But Derwent, mamma!' pleaded Muriel.

This time Mrs. Smith made no sign. She had launched her little boat for rescue, and it had carried off nothing and saved no one; so now her daughter must do the best that she could do for herself. After all, taken by itself and without those consequences

which she was afraid lurked behind, it was not a serious misfortune as life reckons its misfortunes; and if, like Hilda with the porridge, Muriel were never to know more humiliation than that involved in standing up with a bad dancer, and never have worse things said of her, and hers, than the ill-natured little sarcasms which would be flung at her head for carrying off a prize parti for the best of the evening, she would be exceptionally fortunate, thought the mother, sitting there in her statuesque way, and shaping the flowers of a deadly nightshade, introduced for effect of line and colour into a bunch of ox-eye daisies.

So there was no help for it, evidently; and the bargain had to be concluded, with good will or bad. Neither would a social miracle be worked in her favour; nor was it likely that any such catastrophe as that Guy Perceval should have an attack of measles say, or fall downstairs and sprain his ankle, would come in to break through the network in which she was enclosed. She was caught and caged, and she must submit to her captivity since struggling would not set her free. How little Guy Perceval, the master of the Manor, accustomed to think of himself as one who had but to throw the handkerchief wherever his fancy directed, when he should make up his mind to give that Manor a mistress, imagined the dismay which he had created in this dowerless, fatherless Muriel Smith, by his pertinacious determination to do her honour! As he stood up to wish her good-bye, he repeated the various items of the engagement as a lesson not to be forgotten: the first waltz; the first galop—the coquette galop—poor Muriel! the first mazurka and the first quadrille at the Brown de Paumelles' ball; Muriel's heart sinking like lead as she said yes, and buried in that yes all her pride and more than half the pleasure. No one in or near Grantley Bourne danced with so much grace, precision, lightness as she; and, like all healthy and natural girls, she was fond of dancing and particular as to the skill of her partner. To be doomed then to three round dances and one square with a partner whom a marionette would put to shame, was an infliction sufficiently severe in itself; but how much more severe when to this was added the loss of that other, and a certain uneasy consciousness that this other would not like it; and that the women would not like it; and that she would gain a great deal of envy, hatred, and malice, by being thus singled out by Mr. Perceval of the Manor for undue honour; she who only felt herself singled out for undue victimization!

But she was in the grasp of necessity, and the laws of honour had to be obeyed whether they were to her comfort or her disadvantage.

When Guy Perceval left, he left holding her committed to conditions which were symbolic to him of more than an engagement to dance four special dances at a ball. He had prepared the ground so far. For the rest, he would not be precipitate. Those frequent and ostentatiously preferential dances with Muriel Smith would keep off other aspirants, he thought, standing on his rent-roll and personality as a rock which no one could overthrow. And then, when he had exactly determined all about Mr. Smith—which he would do when he demanded the daughter's hand of her mother before speaking to her himself—he would introduce her to the world as his choice, and thus put an end to the doubts and surmises which still crept about society. Yes, he would have everything cleared up, and precisely outlined, he thought triumphantly; and Muriel should be Mrs. Perceval of the Manor when the right time came. Meanwhile he would wait.

For her expression of satisfaction with the contract as it stood Muriel went up to her mother as soon as Guy had gone, and laying her hand on her shoulder, said in a distressed voice:

‘Oh mamma! what shall I do?’

‘Make the best of it, my dear,’ said Mrs. Smith, not looking up.

‘But his dancing! you never saw anything so dreadful!’ cried poor Muriel. ‘He literally makes himself the laughing-stock of the room; and he so often falls. Think, mamma, how terrible it would be if I were to fall!’

‘You must try not,’ answered her mother a little coldly; then more kindly: ‘I know, my dear, it must be a great annoyance to you, but you see I could not save you. And after all it really does not much signify, one way or the other. Look at it in that light, Muriel; against loss, or death, or sorrow, where does it stand? And by the next day you will have forgotten all about it.’

‘I do not think I shall, mamma; but I will try and not think too much of it,’ said Muriel with pretty earnestness, but rueful all the same; and then she went away to find Derwent and confide her perplexities to his keeping.

Mrs. Smith would not have offered this commonplace kind of comfort had she known what was in Muriel's mind about those dances and the partner whom she had specially desired. Nor would she have shown herself so comparatively indifferent to the whole affair, had she not been absorbed in that great Something which was coming on them all. But, like most parents, she saw nothing of what was passing before her eyes, and the giants whose assaults she feared were only windmills on the horizon, while the real dangers were gliding at her feet unseen and unsuspected, untracked and suffered to glide and grow unchecked.

CHAPTER IX.

CLOUDS ON THE HORIZON.

IF her mother was more philosophic than sympathetic, Derwent was full of wrathful compassion for Muriel's distress, and vowed hotly that he would prevent such desecration as this to which she stood committed, no matter what the cost. She should not make herself conspicuous by dancing so often with Guy Perceval, nor should she waste her grace and skill in dancing with him more than the one quadrille, which would not compromise her in any way.

He said all this with his head held high, and that ring of command in his voice which women who have never learnt the desolateness of independence or the lovelessness of freedom, do not resent in the men of their family—which they rather like indeed, and feel comforted and upheld thereby. Only, as Muriel did not wish to be dishonourable even to a bad waltzer and on such a trifle as an engagement for a few dances, nor yet to quarrel with Mr. Perceval at all, she put in a little word of remonstrance, and said :

‘But how can it be helped now that I have promised him, dear ? It will make a scene ; and no girl likes a fuss to be made about her.’

To which Derwent replied with the air of a professed duellist who knew the exact lines and limits of all things belligerent :

‘You may trust me, I think, Muriel. I shall protect you from annoyance, not put you into a false position.’

‘Yes, I know, dear,’ she answered ; ‘I do trust you ; but I do not want to be ungenerous, or to break my word to Mr. Perceval. It is horrible to have to dance with him, I know, and I cannot bear to think of it—the first four dances !—and such a waltzer !—but what can I do ?’

‘You have put the thing into my hands, and you must do as I tell you,’ said Derwent superbly. ‘You shall not dance with him more than that one quadrille.’

He said this in a rather loud voice, and the day was still, when sound travels far.

‘Not dance with whom ?’ asked Arthur Machell, rounding the corner of the road with Hilda's hand in his.

Muriel blushed, and looked happy, confused, perplexed, distressed, all in one. Derwent's fraternal belligerency suddenly lost itself in a flush of soft delight ; but he could not abandon the theme or the tone that he had assumed, unless he wished to betray more

than he cared to show; so, after he had said all that good manners required him to say, he took up his parable and answered Arthur's question.

'Mr. Perceval has been engaging my sister for half the dances of the evening,' he said disdainfully; 'and she is afraid I am going to forget myself and fight a duel about it, because I will not allow her to keep her engagement.'

'You are quite right, Derwent; I claim the first waltz, Miss Smith!' cried Arthur.

She looked down and then she looked up.

'That is just what Mr. Perceval did,' she answered.

'That does not count,' said Arthur laughing; 'you owe me the first waltz, and I shall hold you to it.'

'I do not see how I can,' said Muriel with extreme embarrassment, and heroically preferring duty to pleasure.

'If you prefer Mr. Perceval of course I have nothing to say,' said Arthur stiffly.

'I do not prefer him, but I have promised,' returned Muriel, to whom promises were sacred, and who really felt it was rather hard that Arthur should be displeased when she wanted so much to dance with him, and felt herself so ill-used by fate that she could not.

'I have told you, Muriel, that you may hold yourself free to make any other engagement you like. You are not going to dance with Mr. Perceval,' interposed Derwent with full fraternal authority.

'But if she wishes? It is a pity to interfere,' said Arthur, still stiff and unpleasant, in his secret heart too annoyed at Derwent's tone. It is such wretched taste for a man to assume this kind of command over a sister before other men! He was disgusted that Muriel's brother could be such a snob as to do it!

For all answer Muriel looked straight into his face; and her soft sweet eyes, dewy, tender, reproachful, pleading, brought him back from the harsh and uncomfortable state into which he was drifting through jealousy, and gave him his better and truer self once more.

'I see it all,' he said hastily; 'but you must throw him over. We shall have the whole neighbourhood chattering like so many magpies if you do not. I would advise you to this if you were my sister—indeed I would, Miss Smith. Do you think I would let Hilda here be afflicted in such an absurd manner? Leave yourself in your brother's hands, and dance the first waltz with me.'

'Yes, do, Muriel,' said Hilda caressingly.

'Of course she will,' returned Derwent; 'and it will make it all right, Miss Machell, if you will give me the first dance—will you?'

Hilda's pretty face beamed. But she looked at her brother with a certain trouble.

'I do not know if mother will let me dance, but if she does——' she said hesitatingly.

'You will give me the first?'

'Yes,' she answered softly, still looking at her brother.

'Subject to my mother's approval,' put in Arthur a little awkwardly. He was glad to secure Muriel for himself, and so far grateful to Derwent for his advocacy; but Hilda's assignment to Muriel's brother was a different thing altogether; one that he did not cordially endorse for his own part, and that he knew would make the lady mother furious. It was the child's first appearance in public; and the first dance granted to the least admirable young man in the place, as the world and common sense count desirability, was an arrangement to which not even his own love for Muriel could reconcile him. One's own sisters are so different from those of other men, he thought; and what he might do with respect to Muriel, Derwent was certainly not entitled to imitate towards Hilda.

'I do not think that Lady Machell will object,' said Derwent a little conceitedly; 'at all events, I regard it as an engagement.'

'But you must remember that this is Hilda's first ball, and my mother, who is strict, may not approve of her making an independent engagement,' said Arthur, while Hilda's face fell and Derwent's neck stiffened. 'Don't look down-hearted, little one,' he added kindly. 'You are not going to be left as a wall-flower all the night; but I think you had better leave the choice of your partners to the mother.'

'Very well,' said Hilda, choking back her tears with difficulty, but successfully; 'of course, mother and you know best.'

'But I shall assert my claim,' said Derwent.

'And I mine,' Arthur answered, drawing off the conversation from Hilda to Muriel.

'What a dreadful confusion it all is!' she said. 'Everybody engaged and everybody breaking their engagements, and no one satisfied with things as they are.'

'Not you? I am sorry for that. I am quite satisfied,' Arthur answered with emphasis.

'Are you tired, Muriel?' asked Derwent suddenly.

'No,' she said; 'why?'

'If you are not, we can turn back and walk a little way with Miss Machell and Arthur,' he answered.

'Yes, do,' said Arthur and Hilda in a breath; and the four young people ranged themselves in line, Muriel and Hilda in the middle, flanked by the brothers—exchanged.

This arrangement did not last long, for very soon—who knows how it came about?—the couples naturally separated, and Arthur and Muriel went on in front, leaving Derwent and Hilda to follow. How time passed none of them knew, for none took note. It was a moment of happiness snatched from life, a moment of perfect peace and security borrowed from uncertainty and doubt. Derwent, absorbed in his own delight, forgot to wonder why Muriel looked so divinely happy—Arthur Machell, so joyful, so heroic; and Arthur, absorbed in his, had not a thought of fear to give to Hilda, walking with such treacherous meekness by Derwent's side, listening while he recited suggestive odes and sonnets and hummed through the airs of songs, each one of which pleaded a lover's cause and revealed a lover's case. It was all Arcadian, loving, youthful, innocent, and yet dangerous; when, the demon of ill-luck being abroad, the pretty little fairy palace in which they were living came to the ground, as they suddenly found themselves face to face with Lady Machell, driving Wilfrid over to Paumelle House, whither she was bound, to give Mrs. Brown some useful hints as to precedence and policy.

She drew rein as she came up to them, and stopped; a world of suppressed wrath visible on her face.

'What a lucky chance!' cried Derwent; who, without the faintest suspicion of any reason why Lady Machell should be wrathful at the meeting, did not read the signs which were plain enough to her own children, who knew better than he what was the estimation in which she held the Smith family. 'Lady Machell, you must settle this knotty point for us.'

'What knotty point?' asked my lady, uncomfortably disarmed.

Derwent had that way with him belonging to the innocently vain. He took the good will of the world for granted, not seeing why it should be otherwise; and, just as this same world accepts us at our own valuation, so does it dance to the tunes which we pipe and answer as the echo when we demand.

'My sister has got into a difficulty,' said Derwent; 'and some of us are rather puzzled how to get her out of it. I cannot say that I am, but I will be guided by your advice.'

This was touching Lady Machell on a weak point. Outside the restoration of the family to its original position, her greatest am-

bition was to be considered the spiritual Minerva of the district; the one woman whose judgment was never at fault, and who was capable of solving all difficulties whatsoever.

‘What is it?’ she asked again.

‘Mr. Perceval called on my mother yesterday, and secured Muriel’s promise for the first four dances—the first waltz, galop, mazurka, quadrille,’ said Derwent, unconscious of the fragrant flowers of hope and design which he was crushing in my lady’s soul at this moment. ‘As, in the first place, Mr. Perceval is not a very satisfactory partner, and as, in the second, I do not choose that my sister shall be made conspicuous in any manner, I say that she is to break the engagement, and that I will take it on myself to tell Mr. Perceval that she has done so, and to give him my reasons,’ emphasizing the pronoun. ‘Am I right, Lady Machell?’

‘Quite,’ said my lady crisply; while Muriel looked up at her with a grateful face that was the Scylla to the Charybdis on the other side.

‘I thought so too,’ said Arthur; ‘and so engaged Miss Smith myself, that she might have two champions instead of one.’

A heavy frown came over Wilfrid’s face; it was a look of as much pain as anger—the look which makes a man dangerous.

‘And to make it more complete, I have begged for the honour of Miss Machell’s hand for the first dance,’ said Derwent superbly, looking supremely handsome and self-satisfied.

This was too much.

‘Impossible,’ cried Lady Machell sharply.

‘Impossible!’ echoed Wilfrid angrily.

Derwent looked from one to the other.

‘Why?’ he asked with genuine surprise. ‘There can be no question of Mr. Brown de Paumelle dancing with Miss Machell; why then not I as well as another? We are old friends, Lady Machell, and the arrangement does not seem impossible to me at all; more especially in view of the coil into which my sister has been led.’

‘A girl of my daughter’s age makes no private engagements of any kind,’ said Lady Machell stiffly. ‘She is too young to promise even a dance without my consent.’

‘Then I appeal to you,’ said Derwent, laying his hand with boyish familiarity on Lady Machell’s arm. ‘Do you grant me the honour of the first dance with Miss Machell?’

‘I intended her to dance with her brother Arthur,’ said Lady Machell coldly. Had she not been afraid, and had Derwent Smith been in all respects profitable and desirable, she would have been touched by his manner. As things were, she hardened her heart.

against him, and what she would have smiled at as a charm in other circumstances, she now frowned on as an impertinence.

‘But Arthur is engaged to my sister,’ said Derwent.

‘Yes, I have secured Miss Smith,’ said Arthur with a smile to Muriel, who, looking at Lady Machell, said with a certain soft dignity that became her wonderfully well:

‘You must not let any engagement to me interfere with your plans, Lady Machell. And if I am to break my engagement with Mr. Perceval, perhaps I ought to sit out altogether.’

‘I am not going to be thrown over in that manner,’ laughed Arthur, his laugh a little forced. ‘You have promised me the first dance, and I hold you to it.’

‘I think you are all making a ridiculous row about nothing,’ said Wilfrid savagely. ‘Really, Arthur, the whole county will not stand aside to see whether you dance the first waltz, or the second, with Miss Smith. As for you, Smith, you have been a little premature, and more than a little inconsiderate, in securing my sister so long beforehand; but’—he shrugged his broad shoulders—‘it is of very little consequence, one way or the other,’ he added after a moment, with disdain.

‘It is annoying, though it is unimportant,’ said my lady quite as crossly as her son; then, in a low voice, she said to Arthur angrily: ‘I should have expected more tact, Arthur, more judgment from you. When I trust Hilda to your care, I have the right to expect that you will take care of her, and not let her run into entanglements and difficulties of this kind.’

‘I am sorry that you are vexed, mother,’ said Arthur, taking his scolding with the pleasantest air of affectionate indifference. ‘But, as Wilfrid says, are we not all making our frogs into oxen? and with a little disregard to Miss Smith and her brother? which is rather questionable on the score of good breeding;—we will not talk of good feeling.’

‘It is yourself who are to blame,’ said Lady Machell in the same lowered voice; ‘you have been very foolish—very wrong, Arthur.’

‘You are only a boy yet, and will never be anything else,’ said Wilfrid with bitter contempt. ‘You cannot see things which are plain before you, and you cannot give up what you wish nor do what you do not like.’

‘Thanks, my elder brother,’ Arthur answered with a deep flush. ‘Now, mother, I am going, if you and Wilfrid think that you have lectured me enough.’

‘But leave your companions,’ said Lady Machell sternly.

‘It depends on them whether they care to go farther or not,’ answered Arthur with a certain steady pride which was just the

feeling that his mother most dreaded to rouse in him. 'Are you tired, Miss Smith? coming on with us, Derwent?' he asked, turning to the two who had drawn out of hearing during the last low conversation.

'No,' said Muriel in a half whisper to her brother. 'We must go home, Derwent; do not let us go on.'

'We will leave you now,' said Derwent, as if he were a king. 'I shall hold Miss Machell engaged to me, Lady Machell,' he added, flinging up his head.

'I will think of it. I promise nothing,' said my lady coldly.

'You will not teach Miss Machell to break her word?' said Derwent, returning to the charge. It was the kind of contest in which all his tenacity was roused, and where he was determined to have his own way.

'A child makes no promise,' she replied; 'and Hilda knows that she has done wrong to take on herself such an act of independence and disobedience.'

'She is not to blame,' said Arthur hastily; while Hilda stood with her eyes cast to the ground and her hands clasped in each other, the prettiest little statue of penitence imaginable.

'No, if any one is to blame, it is I,' said Derwent manfully.

'Don't you think the discussion has lasted long enough?' said Wilfrid.

All this time he had not looked once at Muriel since the first meeting. He saw clearly enough how things were with her and Arthur; and to know that he had sacrificed himself for the good of his family, that his brother might profit by his pain and take up his discarded treasure, made the present moment hard to bear. For the instant he seemed to hate both her and him; to accuse him of selfishness, weakness, unfaithfulness, and her of coquetry and shameful scheming.

'Quite,' said Arthur good-temperedly; 'we will close it whenever you like.'

'Good-bye, Lady Machell,' said Muriel, taking Wilfrid's hint and coming forward. 'Good-bye, Captain Machell.'

She half held out her hand, but my lady was occupied with the thong of her whip.

'Good morning, Miss Smith,' she said coldly; and 'Good morning, Miss Smith,' Wilfrid echoed with even more coldness.

But Arthur, to make amends, took her hand and held it frankly in the face of both mother and brother, saying with a curious mixture of opposition and tenderness:

'The first waltz, remember, Miss Muriel; and Guy Perceval cashiered!'

'And the first for me, Miss Machell,' said Derwent in imitation, shaking hands with Hilda and looking at Lady Machell.

'I am weary of the whole thing—such a set of children as you are!' said Lady Machell angrily, as she turned away her head, and added: 'Now, Arthur!' as authoritatively as if he had been a boy.

The young man nodded carelessly, and the group melted away; Derwent and Muriel turning back to Owlett, Arthur and Hilda going on to Machells, and Lady Machell and Wilfrid bearing to the left for Paumelle House.

'It is a dreadful annoyance and confusion altogether,' said my lady after a short pause, when she was alone with her eldest son. 'What was Guy Perceval thinking of when he wished to commit himself in this manner with a girl of Miss Smith's questionable claims to distinction?'

'I suppose he has been smitten with a pair of blue eyes and a blush-rose face!' said Wilfrid with savage contempt. 'It is a way men have.'

'Absurd!' cried Lady Machell, whipping on the cob. 'Guy Perceval is far too particular to think of marrying into a family with the faintest cloud on its fair name; and, say what we will, there is something uncomfortable about the Smiths.'

'Something unknown; no more,' said Wilfrid.

'Which is the same thing,' returned my lady. 'And then to think of that penniless boy having the presumption to engage Hilda!' she went on to say, with increased anger. 'I have never known anything more insolent, more forward!'

'It was presumptuous enough,' said Wilfrid almost as angrily as his mother; 'we must look out and take care that things do not go too far in that direction.'

'Wilfrid, you do not think—surely——' she began.

'I think nothing, mother; I only advise you to look out,' he answered.

'She shall not go to the ball at all!' cried Lady Machell.

'Yes, she must go, mother. The child would be disappointed else,' said Wilfrid, whose one soft place was his love for his little sister; 'but do not let her go far from your side.'

'It is too dreadful!—and after all my care! Such a mere baby as she is too!' her usual self-control swept away in a torrent of mingled anger and anxiety.

'I do not suppose there is even a boy-and-girl flirtation between them yet,' returned Wilfrid; 'and it is scarcely like you, mother, to jump to these conclusions. Still, a little extra watchfulness will do no harm; and Hilda is an admirable child—will never give you any trouble.'

‘No, I am not afraid of *her*,’ said Lady Machell with emphasis; then, touching the secret sore of her heart, she added: ‘If Arthur were to make a foolish marriage, it would break my heart.’

‘No; hearts do not break nowadays,’ he said. ‘You would be very unhappy, and your digestion would suffer, but you would get over it. Arthur would say that his would break if he were prevented from marrying any girl whom he might fancy. But neither his nor yours would go whichever way it turned.’

‘I think I will speak to him about his excessive intimacy with those Smiths, and point out the infinite mischief that he may do his sister,’ said Lady Machell, imagining that her battery was effectually masked.

‘You will do no good. He has not always been easy to manage, good-tempered as he is. But if it will be a satisfaction to yourself to relieve your own mind——’ said Wilfrid, anger with his brother, contempt at the idea of a woman’s interference in the affairs of a man, though even that woman should be his mother, sympathy of sex, and intense jealousy all traceable in his tone and manner thinking to himself at the same time: ‘It would do no good, but it would be a satisfaction too, to me were I to tell him what I think of his folly and how contemptible I find his boyish passion and selfishness!’

‘If it is put before him in the true light—of the harm that it may do his sister——’ repeated Lady Machell, as if she had got hold of a charm.

‘You can try,’ was the grim response; ‘but do not wonder if you fail. Men are sometimes impatient of dictation.’

‘From a mother?’ asked Lady Machell with a burst of pride.

‘From a mother,’ repeated Wilfrid steadily.

‘Here is Mr. Brown de Paumelle,’ said Lady Machell, in a tone of relief, as the fussy, rubicund, rotund possessor of millions, and the worshipper of rank, dashed through the elaborately wrought iron gates, all scroll-work and gilding;—his superb barouche and faultless greys nearly running into the shabby little shandran in which Lady Machell steered the badly-groomed old cob.

And, touching the hem of the golden garment, looking through the grand vista of coming success, she forgot the perplexities connected with those silly children at her back, and for the moment lost her trouble in her joy. But the Brown de Paumelles’ ball was evidently to be the theatre of more than one important drama, and the apparently trivial question of a few dances given here or there hid more than it declared.

(To be continued.)

Suns in Flames.

BY RICHARD A. PROCTOR.

WITHIN the last few weeks news has arrived of a catastrophe the effects of which must in all probability have been disastrous, not to a district, or a country, or a continent, or even a world, but to a whole system of worlds. The catastrophe happened many years ago—probably at least a hundred—yet the messenger who brought the news has not been idle on his way, but has sped along at a rate which would suffice to circle this earth eight times in the course of a second. That messenger has had, however, to traverse millions of millions of miles, and only reached our earth last November. The news he brought was that a sun like our own was in conflagration; and on a closer study of his message something was learned as to the nature of the conflagration, and a few facts tending to throw light on the question (somewhat interesting to ourselves) whether our own sun is likely to undergo a similar mishap at any time. What would happen if he did, we know already. The sun which has just met with this disaster—that is, which so suffered a few generations ago—blazed out for a time with several hundred times its former lustre. If our sun were to increase as greatly in light and heat, the creatures on the side of our earth turned towards him at the time would be destroyed in an instant. Those on the dark or night hemisphere would not have to wait for their turn till the earth, by rotating, carried them into view of the destroying sun. In much briefer space the effect of his new fires would be felt all over the earth's surface. The heavens would be dissolved and the elements would melt with fervent heat. In fact no description of such a catastrophe, as affecting the night half of the earth, could possibly be more effective and poetical than St. Peter's account of the day of the Lord coming 'as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein being burned up;' though I imagine the apostle would have been scarce prepared to admit that the earth was in danger from a solar conflagration. Indeed, according to another account, the sun was to be turned into darkness and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord came—a description corresponding well with solar and lunar eclipses, the most noteworthy 'signs

in the heavens,' but agreeing very ill with the outburst of a great solar conflagration.

Before proceeding to inquire into the singular and significant circumstances of the recent outburst, it may be found interesting to inquire briefly into the records which astronomy has preserved of similar catastrophes in former years. These may be compared to the records of accidents on the various railway lines in a country or continent. Those other suns which we call stars are engines working the mighty mechanism of planetary systems, as our sun maintains the energies of our own system; and it is a matter of some interest to us to inquire in how many cases, among the many suns within the range of vision, destructive explosions occur. We may take the opportunity, later, to inquire into the number of cases in which the machinery of solar systems appears to have broken down.

The first case of a solar conflagration on record is that of the new star observed by Hipparchus some 2,000 years ago. In his time, and indeed until quite recently, an object of this kind was called a new star, or a temporary star. But we now know that when a star makes its appearance where none had before been visible, what has really happened has been that a star too remote to be seen has become visible through some rapid increase of splendour. When the new splendour dies out again, it is not that a star has ceased to exist; but simply that a faint star which had increased greatly in lustre has resumed its original condition. Hipparchus's star must have been a remarkable object, for it was visible in full daylight, whence we may infer that it was many times brighter than the blazing Dog-star. It is interesting in the history of science, as having led Hipparchus to draw up a catalogue of stars, the first on record. Some moderns, being sceptical, rejected this story as a fiction; but Biot examining Chinese Chronicles¹ relating to the times of Hipparchus, finds that in 134 B.C. (about nine years before the date of Hipparchus's catalogue) a new star was recorded as having appeared in the constellation Scorpio.

The next new star (that is, stellar conflagration) on record is

¹ Chinese chronicles contain other references to new stars. The annals of Ma-touan-lin, which contain the official records of remarkable appearances in the heavens, include some phenomena which manifestly belong to this class. Thus they record that in the year 173 a star appeared between the stars which mark the hind feet of the Centaur. This star remained visible from December in that year until July in the next (about the same time as Tycho Brahe's and Kepler's new stars, presently to be described). Another star, assigned by these annals to the year 1011, seems to be the same as a star referred to by Hepidannus as appearing A.D. 1012. It was of extraordinary brilliancy, and remained visible in the southern part of the heavens during three months. The annals of Ma-touan-lin assign to it a position low down in Sagittarius.

still more interesting, as there appears some reason for believing that before long we may see another outburst of the same star. In the years 945, 1264, and 1572, brilliant stars appeared in the region of the heavens between Cepheus and Cassiopeia. Sir J. Herschel remarks, that, 'from the imperfect account we have of the places of the two earlier, as compared with that of the last, which was well determined, as well as from the tolerably near coincidence of the intervals of their appearance, we may suspect them, with Goodricke, to be one and the same star, with a period of 312 or perhaps of 156 years.' The latter period may very reasonably be rejected, as one can perceive no reason why the intermediate returns of the star to visibility should have been overlooked, the star having appeared in a region which never sets. It is to be noted that, the period from 945 to 1264 being 319 years, and that from 1264 to 1572 only 308 years, the period of this star (if Goodricke is correct in supposing the three outbursts to have occurred in the same star) would seem to be diminishing. At any time, then, this star might now blaze out in the region between Cassiopeia and Cepheus, for more than 304 years have already passed since its last outburst.

As the appearance of a new star led Hipparchus to undertake the formation of his famous catalogue, so did the appearance of the star in Cassiopeia, in 1572, lead the Danish astronomer Tycho Brahe to construct a new and enlarged catalogue. (This, be it remembered, was before the invention of the telescope.) Returning one evening (November 11, 1572, old style) from his laboratory to his dwelling-house, he found, says Sir J. Herschel, 'a group of country people gazing at a star, which he was sure did not exist an hour before. This was the star in question.'

The description of the star and its various changes is more interesting at the present time, when the true nature of these phenomena is understood, than it was even in the time when the star was blazing in the firmament. It will be gathered from that description and from what I shall have to say further on about the results of recent observations on less splendid new stars, that, if this star should reappear in the next few years, our observers will probably be able to obtain very important information from it. The message from it will be much fuller and more distinct than any we have yet received from such stars, though we have learned quite enough to remain in no sort of doubt as to their general nature.

The star remained visible, we learn, about sixteen months, during which time it kept its place in the heavens without the least variation. 'It had all the radiance of the fixed stars, and

twinkled like them; and was in all respects like Sirius, except that it surpassed Sirius in brightness and magnitude.' It appeared larger than Jupiter, which was at that time at his brightest, and was scarcely inferior to Venus. *It did not acquire this lustre gradually*, but shone forth at once of its full size and brightness, 'as if,' said the chroniclers of the time, 'it had been of instantaneous creation.' For three weeks it shone with full splendour, during which time it could be seen at noonday 'by those who had good eyes, and knew where to look for it.' But before it had been seen a month, it became visibly smaller, and from the middle of December 1572 till March 1574, when it entirely disappeared, it continually diminished in magnitude. 'As it decreased in size, it varied in colour at first, its light was white and extremely bright; it then became yellowish; afterwards of a ruddy colour like Mars; and finished with a pale livid white resembling the colour of Saturn.' All the details of this account should be very carefully noted. It will presently be seen that they are highly characteristic.

Those who care to look occasionally at the heavens to know whether this star has returned to view may be interested to learn whereabouts it should be looked for. The place may be described as close to the back of the star-gemmed chair in which Cassiopeia is supposed to sit—a little to the left of the seat of the chair, supposing the chair to be looked at in its normal position. But as Cassiopeia's chair is always inverted when the constellation is most conveniently placed for observation, and indeed as nine-tenths of those who know the constellation suppose the chair's legs to be the back, and *vice versa*, it may be useful to mention that the star was placed somewhat thus with respect to the straggling W formed by the five chief stars of Cassiopeia. There is a star not very far from the place here indicated, but rather nearer to the middle **W** angle of the W. This, however, is not a bright star; and cannot possibly be mistaken for the expected visitant. (The place of Tycho's star is indicated in my School Star-Atlas and also in my larger Library Atlas. The same remark applies to both the new stars in the Serpent-Bearer, presently to be described.)

In August 1596 the astronomer Fabricius observed a new star in the neck of the Whale, which also after a time disappeared. It was not noticed again till the year 1637, when an observer rejoicing in the name of Phocyllides Holwarda observed it, and, keeping a watch, after it had vanished, upon the place where it had appeared, saw it again come into view nine months after its disappearance. Since then, it has been known as a variable star with a period of about 331 days, 8 hours. It shines at its brightest as

a star of the second magnitude ; and it indicates a somewhat singular remissness on the part of the astronomers of former days, that a star shining so conspicuously for a fortnight, once in each period of $331\frac{1}{3}$ days, should for so many years have remained undetected. It may, perhaps, be thought that, noting this, I should withdraw the objection raised above against Sir J. Herschel's idea that the star in Cassiopeia may return to view once in 156 years, instead of once in 312 years. But there is a great difference between a star which at its brightest shines only as a second-magnitude star, so that it has twenty or thirty companions of equal or greater lustre above the horizon along with it, and a star which surpasses three-fold the splendid Sirius. We have seen that even in Tycho Brahe's day, when probably the stars were not nearly so well known by the community at large, the new star in Cassiopeia had not shone an hour before the country people were gazing at it with wonder. Besides, Cassiopeia and the Whale are constellations very different in position. The familiar stars of Cassiopeia are visible on every clear night, for they never set. The stars of the Whale, at least of the part to which the wonderful variable star belongs, are below the horizon during rather more than half the twenty-four hours ; and a new star there would only be noticed, probably (unless of exceeding splendour), if it chanced to appear during that part of the year when the Whale is high above the horizon between eventide and midnight, or in the autumn and early winter.

It is a noteworthy circumstance about the variable star in the Whale, deservedly called *Mira*, or *The Wonderful*, that it does not always return to the same degree of brightness. Sometimes it has been a very bright second-magnitude star when at its brightest, at others it has barely exceeded the third magnitude. Hevelius relates that during the four years between October 1672 and December 1676, *Mira* did not show herself at all ! As this star fades out, it changes in colour from white to red.

Towards the end of September 1604, a new star made its appearance in the constellation *Ophiuchus*, or the *Serpent-Bearer*. Its place was near the heel of the right foot of '*Ophiuchus large*.' Kepler tells us that it had no hair or tail, and was certainly not a comet. Moreover, like the other fixed stars, it kept its place unchanged, showing unmistakably that it belonged to the star-depths, not to nearer regions. 'It was exactly like one of the stars, except that in the vividness of its lustre, and the quickness of its sparkling, it exceeded anything that he had ever seen before. It was every moment changing into some of the colours of the rainbow, as yellow, orange, purple, and red ; though it was generally white when it was at some distance from the vapours of the

horizon.' In fact, these changes of colour must not be regarded as indicating aught but the star's superior brightness. Every very bright star, when close to the horizon, shows these colours, and so much the more distinctly as the star is the brighter. Sirius, which surpasses the brightest stars of the northern hemisphere full four times in lustre, shows these changes of colour so conspicuously that they were regarded as specially characteristic of this star, insomuch that Homer speaks of Sirius (not by name, but as the star of autumn) shining most beautifully when laved of ocean's wave—that is, when close to the horizon. And our own poet, Tennyson, following the older poet, sings how

the fiery Sirius alters hue,
And bickers into red and emerald.

The new star was brighter than Sirius, and was about five degrees lower down, when at its highest above the horizon, than Sirius when *he* culminates. Five degrees being equal to nearly ten times the apparent diameter of the moon, it will be seen how much more favourable the conditions were in the case of Kepler's star for those coloured scintillations which characterised that orb. Sirius never rises very high above the horizon. In fact, at his highest (near midnight in winter, and, of course, near midday in summer) he is about as high above the horizon as the sun at midday in the first week in February. Kepler's star's greatest height above the horizon was little more than three-fourths of this, or equal to about the sun's elevation at midday on January 13 or 14 in any year.

Like Tycho Brahe's star, Kepler's was brighter even than Jupiter, and only fell short of Venus in splendour. It preserved its lustre for about three weeks, after which time it gradually grew fainter and fainter until some time between October 1605 and February 1606, when it disappeared. The exact day is unknown, as during that interval the constellation of the Serpent-Bearer is above the horizon in the daytime only. But in February 1606, when it again became possible to look for the new star in the night-time, it had vanished. It probably continued to glow with sufficient lustre to have remained visible, but for the veil of light under which the sun concealed it, for about sixteen months altogether. In fact, it seems very closely to have resembled Tycho's star, not only in appearance and in the degree of its greatest brightness, but in the duration of its visibility.

In the year 1670 a new star appeared in the constellation Cygnus, attaining the third magnitude. It remained visible, but not with this lustre, for nearly two years. After it had faded

almost out of view, it flickered up again for a while, but soon after it died out, so as to be entirely invisible. Whether a powerful telescope would still have shown it is uncertain, but it seems extremely probable. It may be, indeed, that this new star in the Swan is the same which has made its appearance within the last few weeks; but on this point the evidence is uncertain.

On April 28, 1848, Mr. Hind (Superintendent of the Nautical Almanac, and discoverer of ten new members of the solar system) noticed a new star of the fifth magnitude in the Serpent-Bearer, but in quite another part of that large constellation than had been occupied by Kepler's star. A few weeks later, it rose to the fourth magnitude. But afterwards its light diminished until it became invisible to ordinary eyesight. It did not vanish utterly, however. It is still visible with telescopic power, shining as a star of the eleventh magnitude, that is, five magnitudes below the faintest star discernible with the unaided eye.

This is the first new star which has been kept in view since its apparent creation. But we are now approaching the time when it was found that as so-called new stars continue in existence long after they have disappeared from view, so also they are not in reality new, but were in existence long before they became visible to the naked eye.

On May 12, 1866, shortly before midnight, Mr. Birmingham, of Tuam, noticed a star of the second magnitude in the Northern Crown, where hitherto no star visible to the naked eye had been known. Dr. Schmidt, of Athens, who had been observing that region of the heavens the same night, was certain that up to 11 p.m., Athens local time, there was no star above the fourth magnitude in the place occupied by the new star. So that, if this negative evidence can be implicitly relied on, the new star must have sprung at least from the fourth, and probably from a much lower magnitude, to the second, in less than three hours—eleven o'clock at Athens corresponding to about nine o'clock by Irish railway time. A Mr. Barker, of London, Canada, put forward a claim to having seen the new star as early as May 4—a claim not in the least worth investigating, so far as the credit of first seeing the new star is concerned, but exceedingly important in its bearing on the nature of the outburst affecting the star in Corona. It is unpleasant to have to throw discredit on any definite assertion of facts; unfortunately, however, Mr. Barker, when his claim was challenged, laid before Mr. Stone, of the Greenwich Observatory, records so very definite of observations made on May 4, 8, 9, and 10, that we have no choice but either to admit these observations, or to infer that he fell under the

delusive effects of a very singular trick of memory. He mentions in his letter to Mr. Stone that he had sent full particulars of his observations on those early dates to Professor Watson, of Ann Arbor University, on May 17; but (again unfortunately) instead of leaving that letter to tell its own story in Professor Watson's hands, he asked Professor Watson to return it to him: so that when Mr. Stone very naturally asked Professor Watson to furnish a copy of this important letter, Professor Watson had to reply, 'About a month ago, Mr. Barker applied to me for this letter, and I returned it to him, as requested, without preserving a copy. I can, however,' he proceeded, 'state positively that he did not mention any actual observation earlier than May 14. He said he thought he had noticed a strange star in the Crown about two weeks before the date of his first observation—May 14—but not particularly, and that he did not recognise it until the 14th. He did not give any date, and did not even seem positive as to identity. . . . When I returned the letter of May 17, I made an endorsement across the first page, in regard to its genuineness, and attached my signature. I regret that I did not preserve a copy of the letter in question; but if the original is produced, it will appear that my recollection of its contents is correct.' I think no one can blame Mr. Stone, if, on the receipt of this letter, he stated that he had not the 'slightest hesitation' in regarding Mr. Barker's earlier observations as 'not entitled to the slightest credit.'¹

It may be fairly taken for granted that the new star leapt very quickly, if not quite suddenly, to its full splendour. Birmingham, as we have seen, was the first to notice it, on May 12. On the

¹ Still, a circumstance must be mentioned which tends to show that the star may have been visible a few hours earlier than Dr. Schmidt supposed. Mr. M. Walter, surgeon of the 4th regiment, then stationed in North India, wrote (oddly enough, on May 12, 1867, the first anniversary of Mr. Birmingham's discovery) as follows to Mr. Stone:—'I am certain that this same conflagration was distinctly perceptible here at least six hours earlier. My knowledge of the fact came about in this wise. The night of the 12th of May last year was exceedingly sultry, and about eight o'clock on that evening I got up from the tea-table and rushed into my garden to seek a cooler atmosphere. As my door opens towards the east, the first object that met my view was the Northern Crown. My attention was at once arrested by the sight of a strange star outside the crown' (that is, outside the circle of stars forming the diadem, not outside the constellation itself). The new star 'was then certainly quite as bright—I rather thought more so—as its neighbour Alphecca,' the chief gem of the Crown. 'I was so much struck with its appearance, that I exclaimed to those indoors, "Why, here is a new comet!"' He made a diagram of the constellation, showing the place of the new star correctly. Unfortunately, Mr. Walter does not state why he is so confident, a year after the event, that it was on the 12th of May, and not on the 13th, that he noticed the new star. If he fixed the date only by the star's appearance as a second-magnitude star, his letter proves nothing; for we know that on the 13th it was still shining as brightly as Alphecca, though on the 14th it was perceptibly fainter.

evening of May 13, Schmidt of Athens discovered it independently, and a few hours later it was noticed by a French engineer named Courbebaisse. Afterwards, Baxendell, of Manchester, and others, independently saw the star. Schmidt, examining Argelander's charts of 324,000 stars (charts which I have had the pleasure of mapping in a single sheet) found that the star was not a new one, but had been set down by Argelander as between the ninth and tenth magnitudes. Referring to Argelander's list, we find that the star had been twice observed—viz., on May 18, 1855, and on March 31, 1856.

Birmingham wrote at once to Mr. Huggins, who, in conjunction with the late Dr. Miller, had been for some time engaged in observing stars and other celestial objects with the spectroscope. These two observers at once directed their telescope armed with spectroscopic adjuncts—the telespectroscope is the pleasing name of the compound instrument—to the new-comer. The result was rather startling. It may be well, however, before describing it, to indicate in a few words the meaning of various kinds of spectroscopic evidence.

The light of the sun, sifted out by the spectroscope, shows all the colours but not all the tints of the rainbow. It is spread out into a large rainbow-tinted streak, but at various places (a few thousand) along the streak there are missing tints; so that in fact the streak is crossed by a multitude of dark lines. We know that these lines are due to the absorptive action of vapours existing in the atmosphere of the sun, and from the position of the lines we can tell what the vapours are. Thus, hydrogen by its absorptive action produces four of the bright lines. The vapour of iron is there, the vapour of sodium, magnesium, and so on. Again, we know that these same vapours, which, by their absorptive action, cut off rays of certain tints, emit light of just those tints. In fact, if the glowing mass of the sun could be suddenly extinguished, leaving his atmosphere in its present intensely heated condition, the light of the faint sun which would thus be left us would give (under spectroscopic scrutiny) those very rays which now seem wanting. There would be a spectrum of multitudinous bright lines, instead of a rainbow-tinted spectrum crossed by multitudinous dark lines. It is, indeed, only by contrast that the dark lines appear dark, just as it is only by contrast that the solar spots seem dark. Not only the penumbra but the umbra of a sunspot, not only the umbra but the nucleus, not only the nucleus but the deeper black which seems to lie at the core of the nucleus, shine really with a lustre far exceeding that of the electric light, though by contrast with the rest of the sun's surface the penumbra looks dark, the umbra darker

still, the nucleus deep black, and the core of the nucleus jet black. So the dark lines across the solar spectrum mark where certain rays are relatively faint, though in reality intensely lustrous. Conceive another change than that just imagined. Conceive the sun's globe to remain as at present, but the atmosphere to be excited to many times its present degree of light and splendour: then would all these dark lines become bright, and the rainbow-tinted background would be dull or even quite dark by contrast. This is not a mere fancy. At times, local disturbances take place in the sun which produce just such a change in certain constituents of the sun's atmosphere, causing the hydrogen, for example, to glow with so intense a heat that, instead of its lines appearing dark, they stand out as bright lines. Occasionally, too, the magnesium in the solar atmosphere (over certain limited regions only, be it remembered) has been known to behave in this manner. It was so during the intensely hot summer of 1872, insomuch that the Italian observer Tacchini, who noticed the phenomenon, attributed to such local overheating of the sun's magnesium vapour the remarkable heat from which we then for a time suffered.

Now, the stars are suns, and the spectrum of a star is simply a miniature of the solar spectrum. Of course, there are characteristic differences. One star has more hydrogen, at least more hydrogen at work absorbing its rays, and thus has the hydrogen lines more strongly marked than they are in the solar spectrum. Another star shows the lines of various metals more conspicuously, showing that the glowing vapours of such elements, iron, copper, mercury, tin, and so forth, either hang more densely in the star's atmosphere than in our sun's, or, being cooler, absorb their special tints more effectively. But speaking generally, a stellar spectrum is like the solar spectrum. There is the rainbow-tinted streak, which implies that the source of light is glowing solid, liquid, or highly compressed vaporous matter, and athwart the streak there are the multitudinous dark lines which imply that around the glowing heart of the star there are envelopes of relatively cool vapours.

We can understand, then, the meaning of the evidence obtained from the new star in the Northern Crown.

In the first place, the new star showed the rainbow-tinted streak crossed by dark lines, which indicated its sun-like nature. *But, standing out on that rainbow-tinted streak as on a dark background, were four exceedingly bright lines—lines so bright, though fine, that clearly most of the star's light came from the glowing vapours to which these lines belonged.* Three of the lines belonged to hydrogen, the fourth was not identified with any known line.

Let us distinguish between what can certainly be concluded from this remarkable observation, and what can only be inferred with a greater or less degree of probability.

It is absolutely certain that when Messrs. Huggins and Miller made their observation (by which time the new star had faded from the second to the third magnitude), enormous masses of hydrogen around the star were glowing with a heat far more intense than that of the star itself within the hydrogen envelope. It is certain that the increase in the star's light, rendering the star visible which before had been far beyond the range of ordinary eyesight, was due to the abnormal heat of the hydrogen surrounding that remote sun.

But it is not so clear whether the intense glow of the hydrogen was caused by combustion or by intense heat without combustion. The difference between the two causes of increased light is important; because on the opinion we form on this point must depend our opinion as to the probability that our sun may one day experience a similar catastrophe, and also our opinion as to the state of the sun in the Northern Crown, after the outburst. To illustrate the distinction in question, let us take two familiar cases of the emission of light. A burning coal glows with red light, and so does a piece of iron placed in a coal fire. But the coal and the iron are undergoing very different processes. The coal is burning, and will presently be consumed; the iron is not burning (except in the sense that it is burning hot, which means only that it will make any combustible substance burn which is brought into contact with it), and will not be consumed though the coal fire be maintained around it for days and weeks and months. So with the hydrogen flames which play all the time over the surface of our own sun. They are not burning like the hydrogen flames which are used for the oxyhydrogen lantern. Were the solar hydrogen so burning, the sun would quickly be extinguished. They are simply aglow with intensity of heat, as a mass of red-hot iron is aglow; and, so long as the sun's energies are maintained, the hydrogen around him will glow in this way without being consumed. As the new fires of the star in the Crown died out rapidly, it is possible that in their case there was actual combustion. On the other hand, it is also possible, and perhaps on the whole more probable, that the hydrogen surrounding the star was simply set glowing with increased lustre owing to some cause not as yet ascertained.

Let us see how these two theories have been actually worded by the students of science themselves who have maintained them.

'The sudden blazing forth of this star,' says Mr. Huggins, 'and

then the rapid fading away of its light, suggest the rather bold speculation that in consequence of some great internal convulsion, a large volume of hydrogen and other gases was evolved from it, the hydrogen, by its combination with some other element,' in other words, by *burning*, 'giving out the light represented by the bright lines, and at the same time heating to the point of vivid incandescence the solid matter of the star's surface. 'As the liberated hydrogen gas became exhausted' (I now quote not Huggins's own words, but words describing his theory in a book which he has edited) 'the flame gradually abated, and, with the consequent cooling, the star's surface became less vivid, and the star returned to its original condition.'

On the other hand, the German physicists, Meyer and Klein, consider the sudden development of hydrogen, in quantities sufficient to explain such an outburst, exceedingly unlikely. They have therefore adopted the opinion, that the sudden blazing out of the star was occasioned by the violent precipitation of some mighty mass, perhaps a planet, upon the globe of that remote sun, 'by which the momentum of the falling mass would be changed into molecular motion, or in other words into heat and light.' It might even be supposed, they urge, that the star in the Crown, by its swift motion, may have come in contact with one of the star clouds which exist in large numbers in the realms of space. 'Such a collision would necessarily set the star in a blaze and occasion the most vehement ignition of its hydrogen.'

Fortunately, our sun is safe for many millions of years to come from contact from any one of its planets. The reader must not, however, run away with the idea that the danger consists only in the gradual contraction of planetary orbits sometimes spoken of. That contraction, if it is taking place at all, of which we have not a particle of evidence, would not draw Mercury to the sun's surface for at least ten million millions of years. The real danger would be in the effects which the perturbing action of the larger planets might produce on the orbit of Mercury. That orbit is even now very eccentric, and must at times become still more so. It might, but for the actual adjustment of the planetary system, become so eccentric that Mercury could not keep clear of the sun; and a blow from even small Mercury (only weighing, in fact, 390 millions of millions of millions of tons), with a velocity of some 300 miles per second, would warm our sun considerably. But there is no risk of this happening in Mercury's case—though the unseen and much more shifty Vulcan (in which planet I beg to express here my utter disbelief) might, perchance, work mischief if he really existed.

As for star clouds lying in the sun's course, we may feel equally confident. The telescope assures us that there are none immediately on the track, and we know, also, that, swiftly though the sun is carrying us onwards through space,¹ many millions of years must pass before he is among the star families towards which he is rushing.

Of the danger from combustion, or from other causes of ignition than those considered by Meyer and Klein, it still remains to speak. But first, let us consider what new evidence has been thrown upon the subject by the observations made on the star which flamed out last November.

The new star was first seen by Professor Schmidt, who has had the good fortune of announcing to astronomers more than one remarkable phenomenon. It was he who discovered in November 1866 that a lunar crater had disappeared, an announcement quite in accordance with the facts of the case. We have seen that he was one of the independent discoverers of the outburst in the Northern Crown. On November 24, at the early hour of 5.41 in the evening (showing that Schmidt takes time by the forelock at his observatory), he noticed a star of the third magnitude in the constellation of the Swan, not far from the tail of that southward-flying celestial bird. He is quite sure that on November 20, the last preceding clear evening, the star was not there. At midnight its light was very yellow, and it was somewhat brighter than the neighbouring star Eta Pegasi, on the Flying Horse's southernmost knee (if anatomists will excuse my following the ordinary usage which calls the wrist of the horse's fore-arm the knee). He sent news of the discovery forthwith to Leverrier, the chief of the Paris observatory; and the observers there set to work to analyse the light of the stranger. Unfortunately, the star's suddenly acquired brilliancy rapidly faded. M. Paul Henry estimated the star's brightness on December 2 as equal only to that of a fifth-magnitude star. Moreover, the colour, which had been very yellow on November 24, was by this time 'greenish, almost blue.' On December 2, M. Cornu, observing during a short time when the star was visible through a break between clouds, found that the star's spectrum consisted almost entirely of bright lines. On December 5, he was able to determine the position of these lines, though still much interrupted by clouds. He found three bright lines of hydrogen, the strong (really double) line of sodium, the (really triple) line of magnesium, and two other lines. One of

¹ The velocity of three or four miles per second inferred by the elder Struve must now be regarded (as I long since pointed out would prove to be the case) as very far short of the real velocity of our system's motion through stellar space.

these last seemed to agree exactly in position with a bright line belonging to the corona seen around the sun during total eclipse.¹

The star has since faded gradually in lustre until, at present, it is quite invisible to the naked eye.

We cannot doubt that the catastrophe which befell this star is of the same general nature as is that which befell the star in the Northern Crown. It is extremely significant that all the elements which manifested signs of intense heat in the case of the star in the Swan, are characteristic of our sun's outer appendages. We know that the coloured flames seen around the sun during total solar eclipse consist of glowing hydrogen, and of glowing matter giving a line so near the sodium line that in the case of a stellar spectrum it would, probably, not be possible to distinguish one from the other. Into the prominences there are thrown from time to time masses of glowing sodium, magnesium, and (but in less degree) iron and other metallic vapours. Lastly, in that glorious appendage, the solar corona, which extends for hundreds of thousands of miles from the sun's surface, there are enormous quantities of some element, whose nature is as yet unknown, showing under spectroscopic analysis the bright line which seems to have appeared in the spectrum of the flaming sun in the Swan.

This evidence seems to me to suggest that the intense heat which suddenly affected this star had its origin from without. At the same time, I cannot agree with Meyer and Klein in considering that the cause of the heat was either the downfall of a planetary mass on the star, or the collision of the star with a star-cloudlet, or nebula, traversing space in one direction while the star swept onwards in another. A planet could not very well come into final conflict with its sun at one fell swoop. It would gradually draw nearer and nearer, not by the narrowing of its path, but by the change of the path's shape. The path would, in fact, become more and more eccentric; until, at length, at its point of nearest approach, the planet would graze its primary, exciting an intense heat where it struck, but escaping actual destruction that time. The planet

¹ M. Cornu's observations are full of interest, and he deserves considerable credit for his energy in availing himself of the few favourable opportunities he had for making them. But he goes beyond his province in adding to his account of them some remarks, intended apparently as a reflection on Mr. Huggins's speculations respecting the star in the Northern Crown. 'I,' says M. Cornu, 'will not try to form any hypothesis about the cause of the outburst. To do so would be unscientific, and such speculations, though interesting, cumber science woefully.' This is sheer nonsense, and comes very ill from an observer whose successes in science have been due entirely to the employment of methods of observation which would have had no existence had others been as unready to think out the meaning of observed facts as he appears to be himself.

would make another circuit, and again graze its sun, at or near the same part of the planet's path. For several circuits this would continue, the grazes not becoming more effective each time, but rather less. The interval between them, however, would grow continually less and less. At last the time would come when the planet's path would be reduced to the circular form, its globe touching its sun's all the way round, and then the planet would very quickly be reduced to vapour, and partly burned up, its substance being absorbed by its sun. But all the successive grazes would be indicated to us by accessions in the star's lustre, the period between each seeming outburst being only a few months at first, and becoming gradually less and less (during a long course of years, perhaps even of centuries), until the planet was finally destroyed. Nothing of this sort has happened in the case of any so-called new star.

As for the rush of a star through a nebulous mass, that is a theory which would scarcely be entertained by anyone acquainted with the enormous distances separating the gaseous star-clouds properly called *nebulae*. There may be small clouds of the same sort scattered much more densely through space; but we have not a particle of evidence that this actually is the case. All we certainly *know* about star-cloudlets suggests that the distances separating them from each other are comparable with those which separate star from star, in which case the idea of a star coming into collision with a star-cloudlet, and still more the idea of this occurring several times in a century, is wild in the extreme.

On the whole, the theory seems more probable than any of these, that enormous flights of large meteoric masses travel around those stars which thus occasionally break forth in conflagration, such flights travelling on exceedingly eccentric paths, and requiring enormously long periods to complete each circuit of their vast orbits. In conceiving this, we are not imagining anything new. Such a meteoric flight would differ only in kind from meteoric flights which are known to circle around our own sun. I am not sure, indeed, that it can be definitely asserted that our sun has no meteoric appendages of the same nature as those which, if this theory be true, excite to intense periodic activity the suns round which they circle. We know that comets and meteors are closely connected, every comet being probably (many certainly) attended by flights of meteoric masses. The meteors which produce the celebrated November showers of falling stars follow in the track of a comet invisible to the naked eye. May we not reasonably suppose, then, that those glorious comets which have not only been visible but conspicuous, shining even in the day-time, and brandish-

ing round tails which, like that of the 'wonder in heaven, the great dragon,' seemed to 'draw the third part of the stars of heaven,' are followed by much denser flights of much more massive meteors? Now some among these giant comets have paths which carry them very close to our sun. Newton's comet, with its tail a hundred millions of miles in length, all but grazed the sun's globe. The comet of 1843, whose tail, says Sir J. Herschel, 'stretched half-way across the sky,' must actually have grazed the sun, though but lightly, for its nucleus was within 80,000 miles of his surface, and its head was more than 160,000 miles in diameter. And these are only two among the few comets whose paths are known. At any time we might be visited by a comet mightier than either, travelling on an orbit intersecting the sun's surface, followed by flights of meteoric masses enormous in size and many in number, which, falling on the sun's globe with the enormous velocity corresponding to their vast orbital range and their near approach to the sun—a velocity of some 360 miles per second—would, beyond all doubt, excite his whole frame, and especially his surface regions, to a degree of heat far exceeding what he now emits.

We have had evidence of the tremendous heat to which the sun's surface would be excited by the downfall of a shower of large meteoric masses. Carrington and Hodgson, on September 1, 1859, observed (independently) the passage of two intensely bright bodies across a small part of the sun's surface—the bodies first increasing in brightness, then diminishing, then fading away. It is generally believed that these were meteoric masses raised to fierce heat by frictional resistance. Now so much brighter did they appear, or rather did that part of the sun's surface appear through which they had rushed, that Carrington supposed the dark glass screen used to protect the eye had broken, and Hodgson described the brightness of this part of the sun as such that the part shone like a brilliant star on the background of the glowing solar surface. Mark, also, the consequences of the downfall of those two bodies only. A magnetic disturbance affected the whole frame of the earth at the very time when the sun had been thus disturbed. Vivid auroras were seen not only in both hemispheres, but in latitudes where auroras are very seldom witnessed. 'By degrees,' says Sir J. Herschel, 'accounts began to pour in of great auroras seen not only in these latitudes but at Rome, in the West Indies, on the tropics within eighteen degrees of the equator (where they hardly ever appear); nay, what is still more striking, in South America and in Australia—where, at Melbourne, on the night of September 2, the greatest aurora ever seen there made its appearance. These auroras were accompanied with unusually great electro-magnetic

disturbances in every part of the world. In many places the telegraph wires struck work. They had too many private messages of their own to convey. At Washington and Philadelphia, in America, the electric signal-men received severe electric shocks. At a station in Norway, the telegraphic apparatus was set fire to; and at Boston, in North America, a flame of fire followed the pen of Bain's electric telegraph, which writes down the message upon chemically prepared paper.' Seeing that where the two meteors fell the sun's surface glowed thus intensely, and that the effect of this accession of energy upon our earth was thus well marked at our earth, can it be doubted that a comet, bearing in its train a flight of many millions of meteoric masses, and falling directly upon the sun, would produce an accession of light and heat, whose consequences would be disastrous? When the earth has passed through the richer portions (not the actual nuclei, be it remembered) of meteor systems, the meteors visible from even a single station have been counted by tens of thousands, and it has been computed that millions must have fallen upon the whole earth. These were meteors following in the train of very small comets. If a very large comet followed by no denser a flight of meteors, but each meteoric mass much larger, fell directly upon the sun, it would not be the outskirts but the nucleus of the meteoric train which would impinge upon him. They would number thousands of millions. The velocity of downfall of each mass would be more than 360 miles per second. And they would continue to pour in upon him for several days in succession, millions falling every hour. It seems not improbable that under this tremendous and long-continued meteoric hail, his whole surface would be caused to glow as intensely as that small part whose brilliancy was so surprising in the observation made by Carrington and Hodgson. In that case, our sun, seen from some remote star whence ordinarily he is invisible, would shine out as a new sun, for a few days, while all things living on our earth, and whatever other members of the solar system are the abode of life, would inevitably be destroyed.

The reader must not suppose that this idea has been suggested merely in the attempt to explain outbursts of stars. The following passage from a paper of considerable scientific interest by Professor Kirkwood, of Bloomington, Indiana, a well-known American astronomer, shows that the idea has occurred to him for a very different reason. He speaks here of a probable connection between the comet of 1843, and the great sun-spot which appeared in June 1843. I am not sure, however, but that we may regard the very meteors which seem to have fallen on the sun on September 1, 1859, as bodies travelling in the track of the comet of 1843—

just as the November meteors seen in 1867-8-9, &c., until 1872, were bodies certainly following in the track of the telescopic comet of 1866. 'The opinion has been expressed by more than one astronomer,' he says, speaking of Carrington's observation, 'that this phenomenon was produced by the fall of meteoric matter upon the sun's surface. Now, the fact may be worthy of note that the comet of 1843 actually grazed the sun's atmosphere about three months before the appearance of the great sun-spot of the same year. Had it approached but little nearer, the resistance of the atmosphere would probably have brought its entire mass to the solar surface. Even at its actual distance it must have produced considerable atmospheric disturbance. But the recent discovery that a number of comets are associated with meteoric matter, travelling in nearly the same orbits, suggests the inquiry whether an enormous meteorite following in the comet's train, and having a somewhat less perihelion distance, may not have been precipitated upon the sun, thus producing the great disturbance observed so shortly after the comet's perihelion passage.'

There are those, myself among the number, who consider the periodicity of the solar spots, that tide of spots which flows to its maximum and then ebbs to its minimum in a little more than eleven years, as only explicable on the theory that a small comet having this period, and followed by a meteor train, has a path intersecting the sun's surface. In an article entitled 'The Sun a Bubble,' which appeared in the 'Cornhill Magazine' for October 1874, I remarked that from the observed phenomena of sun-spots, we might be led to suspect the existence of some as yet undetected comet with a train of exceptionally large meteoric masses, travelling in a period of about eleven years round the sun, and having its place of nearest approach to that orb so close to the solar surface that, when the main flight is passing, the stragglers fall upon the sun's surface. In this case, we could readily understand that, as this small comet unquestionably causes our sun to be variable to some slight degree in brilliancy, in a period of about eleven years, so some much larger comet circling around Mira, in a period of about 331 days, may occasion those alternations of brightness which have been described above. It may be noticed in passing, that it is by no means certain that the time when the sun is most spotted is the time when he gives out least light. Though at such times his surface is dark where the spots are, yet elsewhere it is probably brighter than usual; at any rate, all the evidence we have tends to show that when the sun is most spotted, his energies are most active. It is then that the coloured flames leap to their greatest height and show their greatest brilliancy,

then also that they show the most rapid and remarkable changes of shape.

Supposing there really is, I will not say danger, but a possibility, that our sun may one day, through the arrival of some very large comet travelling directly towards him, share the fate of the suns whose outbursts I have described above, we might be destroyed unawares, or we might be aware for several weeks of the approach of the destroying comet. Suppose, for example, the comet, which might arrive from any part of the heavens, came from out that part of the star-depths which is occupied by the constellation Taurus—then, if the arrival were so timed that the comet, which might reach the sun at any time, fell upon him in May or June, we should know nothing of that comet's approach : for it would approach in that part of the heavens which was occupied by the sun, and his splendour would hide as with a veil the destroying enemy. On the other hand, if the comet, arriving from the same region of the heavens, so approached as to fall upon the sun in November or December, we should see it for several weeks. For it would then approach from the part of the heavens high above the southern horizon at midnight. Astronomers would be able in a few days after it was discovered to determine its path and predict its downfall upon the sun, precisely as Newton calculated the path of *his* comet and predicted its near approach to the sun. It would be known for weeks then that the event which Newton contemplated as likely to cause a tremendous outburst of solar heat, competent to destroy all life upon the surface of our earth, was about to take place ; and, doubtless, the minds of many students of science would be exercised during that interval in determining whether Newton was right or wrong. For my own part, I have very little doubt that, though the change in the sun's condition in consequence of the direct downfall upon his surface of a very large comet would be but temporary, and in that sense slight—for what are a few weeks in the history of an orb which has already existed during thousands of millions of years?—yet the effect upon the inhabitants of the earth would be by no means slight. I do not think, however, that any students of science would remain, after the catastrophe, to estimate or to record its effects.

Fortunately, all that we have learned hitherto from the stars favours the belief that, while a catastrophe of this sort may be possible, it is exceedingly unlikely. We may estimate the probabilities precisely in the same way that an insurance company estimates the chance of a railway accident. Such a company considers the number of accidents which occur among a given number

of railway journeys, and from the smallness of the number of accidents compared with the largeness of the number of journeys estimates the safety of railway travelling. Our sun is one among many millions of suns, any one of which (though all but a few thousands are actually invisible) would become visible to the naked eye, if exposed to the same conditions as have affected the suns in flames described in the preceding pages. Seeing, then, that during the last two thousand years or thereabouts, only a few instances of the kind, certainly not so many as twenty, have been recorded, while there is reason to believe that some of these relate to the same star which has blazed out more than once, we may fairly consider the chance exceedingly small that during the next two thousand, or even the next twenty thousand years, our sun will be exposed to a catastrophe of the kind.

We might arrive at this conclusion independently of any considerations tending to show that our sun belongs to a safe class of system-rulers, and that all or nearly all the great solar catastrophes have occurred among suns of a particular class. There are, however, several considerations of the kind, which are worth noting.

In the first place, we may dismiss as altogether unlikely the visit of a comet from the star-depths to our sun, on a course carrying the comet directly upon the sun's surface. But if, among the comets travelling in regular attendance upon the sun, there be one whose orbit intersects the sun's globe, then that comet must several times ere this have struck the sun, raising him temporarily to a destructive degree of heat. Now, such a comet must have a period of enormous length, for the races of animals now existing upon the earth must all have been formed since that comet's last visit—on the assumption, be it remembered, that the fall of a large comet upon the sun, or rather the direct passage of the sun through the meteoric nucleus of a large comet, would excite the sun to destructive heat. If all living creatures on the earth are to be destroyed when some comet belonging to the solar system makes its next return to the sun, that same comet at its last visit must have raised the sun to an equal, or even greater, intensity of heat, so that either no such races as at present exist had then come into being, or, if any such existed, they must at that time have been utterly destroyed. We may fairly believe that all comets of the destructive sort have been eliminated. Judging from the evidence we have on the subject, the process of the formation of the solar system was one which involved the utilisation of cometic and meteoric matter; and it fortunately so chanced that the comets likely otherwise to have been most mischievous—those, namely,

which crossed the track of planets, and still more those whose paths intersected the globe of the sun—were precisely those which would be earliest and most thoroughly used up in this way.

Secondly, it is noteworthy that all the stars which have blazed out suddenly, except one, have appeared in a particular region of the heavens—the zone of the Milky Way (all, too, on one half of that zone). The single exception is the star in the Northern Crown, and that star appeared in a region which I have found to be connected with the Milky Way by a well-marked stream of stars, not a stream of a few stars scattered here and there, but a stream where thousands of stars are closely aggregated together, though not quite so closely as to form a visible extension of the Milky Way. In my map of 324,000 stars this stream can be quite clearly recognised; but, indeed, the brighter stars scattered along it form a stream recognisable with the naked eye, and have long since been recorded by astronomers as such, forming the stars of the Serpent and the Crown, or a serpentine streak followed by a loop of stars shaped like a coronet. Now the Milky Way, and the outlying streams of stars connected with it, seem to form a region of the stellar universe where fashioning processes are still at work. As Sir W. Herschel long since pointed out, we can recognise in various parts of the heavens various stages of development, and chief among the regions where as yet Nature's work seems incomplete, is the Galactic zone—especially that half of it where the Milky Way consists of irregular streams and clouds of stellar light. As there is no reason for believing that our sun belongs to this part of the galaxy, but on the contrary good ground for considering that he belongs to the class of insulated stars, few of which have shown signs of irregular variation, while none have ever blazed suddenly out with many hundred times their former lustre, we may fairly infer a very high degree of probability in favour of the belief that, for many ages still to come, the sun will continue steadily to discharge his duties as fire, light, and life of the solar system.

GOOD STORIES OF MAN AND OTHER ANIMALS.

BY CHARLES READE.

10. *The Filt.*

A YARN.

PART I.

It was a summer afternoon; the sun shone mellow upon the south sands of Tenby; the clear blue water sparkled to the horizon, and each ripple, as it came ashore, broke into diamonds. This amber sand, broad, bold, and smooth, as the turf at Lord's,—and, indeed, wickets are often pitched on it,—has been called 'Nature's finest promenade'; yet, owing to the attraction of a flower-show, it was now paraded by a single figure; a tall, straight, well-built young man, rather ruddy, but tanned and bronzed by weather; shaved smooth as an egg, and his collar, his tie, and all his dress, very neat and precise; he held a deck-glass, and turned every ten yards, though he had a mile to promenade. These signs denoted a good seaman. Yet his glass swept the land more than the water, and that is not like a sailor.

This incongruity, however, was soon explained, and justified.

There hove in sight a craft as attractive to every true tar, from an admiral of the red to the boatswain's mate, as any cutter, schooner, brig, barque, or ship; and bore down on him, with colours flying aloft and aloft.

Lieutenant Greaves made all sail towards her, for it was Ellen Ap Rice, the loveliest girl in Wales.

He met her, with glowing cheeks, and sparkling eyes, and thanked her warmly for coming. 'Indeed you may,' said she: 'when I promised, I forgot the flower-show.'

'Dear me,' said he, 'what a pity! I would not have asked you.'

'Oh,' said she, 'never mind; I shall not break my heart; but it seems so odd you wanting me to come out here, when you are always welcome at our house, and papa so fond of you.'

Lieutenant Greaves endeavoured to explain. 'Why, you see, Miss Ap Rice, I'm expecting my sailing orders down, and before I go, I want—and the sight of the sea gives one courage.'

'Not always; it gave me a fit of terror the last time I was on it.'

'Ay, but you are not a sailor; it gives *me* courage to say more

than I dare in your own house; you so beautiful, so accomplished, so admired, I am afraid you will never consent to throw yourself away upon a seaman.'

Ellen arched her brows. 'What *are* you saying, Mr. Greaves? Why, it is known all over Tenby that I renounce the military, and have vowed to be a sailor's bride.'

By this it seems there were only two learned professions recognised by the young ladies—at Tenby.

'Ay, ay,' said Greaves, 'an admiral, or that sort of thing.'

'Well,' said the young lady, '*of course* he would *have* to be an admiral; *eventually*. But they cannot be born admirals': at this stage of the conversation she preferred not to look Lieutenant Greaves, R.N., in the face; so she wrote pothooks and hangers on the sand, with her parasol, so carefully, that you would have sworn they must be words of deepest import.

'From a lieutenant to an admiral is a long way,' said Greaves, sadly.

'Yes,' said she, archly, 'it is as far as from Tenby to Valparaiso; where my cousin Dick sailed to, last year,—such a handsome fellow,—and there's Cape Horn to weather. But a good deal depends on courage, and perseverance.' In uttering this last remark she turned her eye askaunt a moment, and a flash shot out of it, that lighted the sailor's bonfire in a moment. 'Oh, Miss Ap Rice, do I understand you? Can I be so fortunate? If courage, perseverance, and devotion, can win you, no other man shall ever—you must have seen I love you.'

'It would be odd if I had not,' said Ellen, blushing a little, and smiling slyly. 'Why, all Tenby has seen it. You don't hide it under a bushel.'

The young man turned red. 'Then I deserve a round dozen at the gangway, for being so indelicate.'

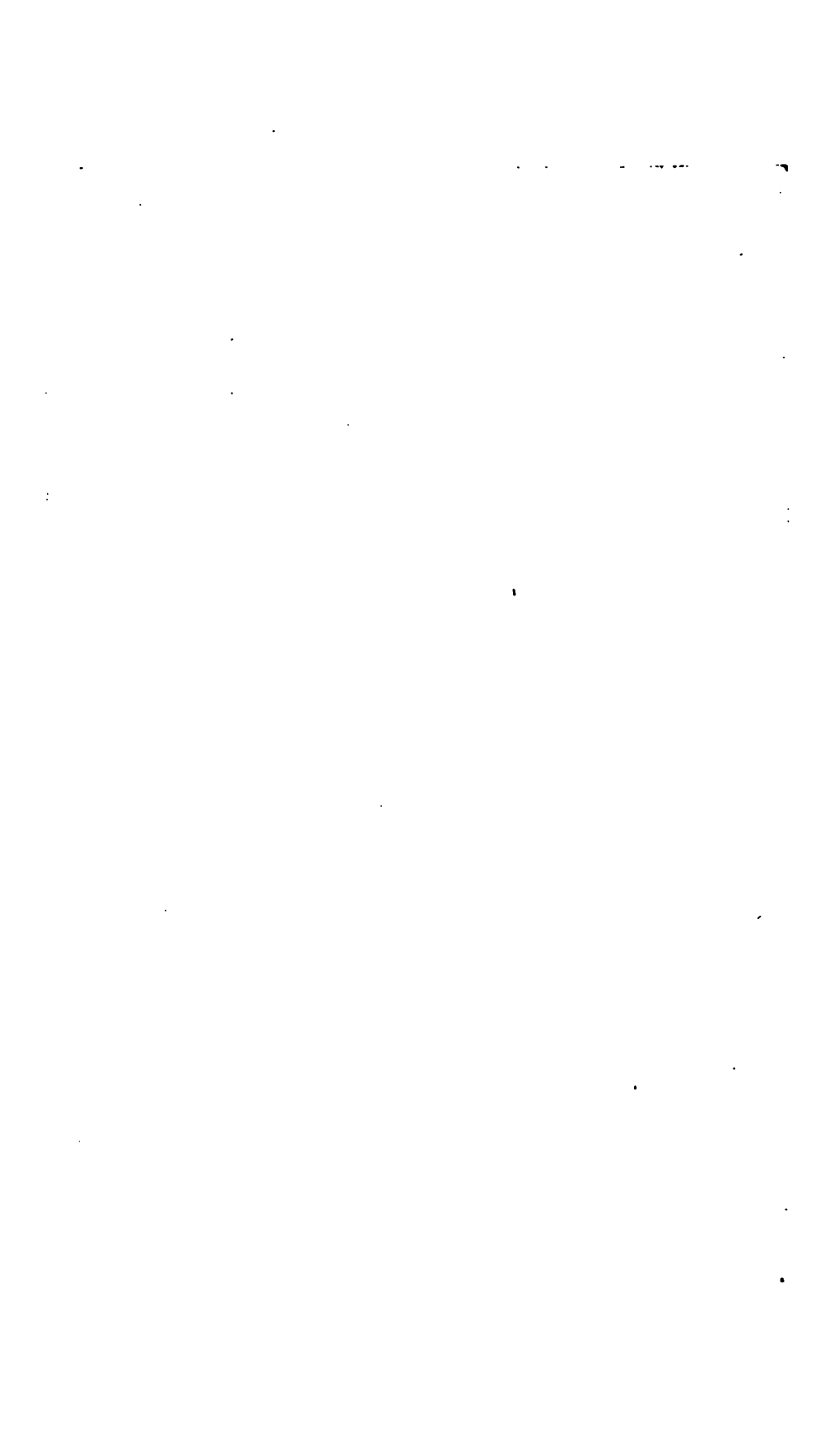
'No, no,' said the young Welshwoman, generously. 'Why do I prefer sailors? Because they are so frank, and open, and artless, and brave. Why, Mr. Greaves, don't you be stupid; your open admiration is a compliment to any girl; and I am proud of it, of course,' said she, gently.

'God bless you!' cried the young man. 'Now, I wish we were at home, that I might go down on my knees to you, without making you the town-talk. Sweet, lovely, darling Ellen; will you try and love me?'

'Humph?—If I had not a great esteem for you, should I be here?'

'Ay, but I am asking for more,' said Greaves: 'for your affection, and your promise to wait for me till I am more than a lieu-





tenant. I dare not ask for your hand till I am a post-captain at least. Ellen, sweet Ellen, may I put this on your dear finger?’

‘Why, it is a ring. No. What for?’

‘Let me put it on, and then I’ll tell you.’

‘I declare, if he had not got it ready on purpose,’ said she, laughing, and was so extremely amused, that she quite forgot to resist, and he whipped it on in a trice. It was no sooner on, than she pulled a grave face; and demanded an explanation of this singular conduct.

‘It means we are engaged,’ said he, joyfully, and flung his cap into the air a great height, and caught it.

‘A trap!’ screamed she. ‘Take it off, this instant.’

‘Must I?’ said he, sadly.

‘Of course you must.’ And she crooked her finger, instead of straightening it.

‘It won’t come off,’ said he, with more cunning than one would have expected.

‘No more it will. Well, I must have my finger amputated, the moment I get home. But, mind, I am not to be caught by such artifices. You must ask papa.’

‘So I will,’ cried Greaves, joyfully. Then, upon reflection, ‘he’ll wonder at my impudence.’

‘Oh, no,’ said Ellen, demurely, ‘you know he is Mayor of the town, and has the drollest applications made to him at times, ha! ha!’

‘How shall I ever break it to him?’ said Greaves. ‘A lieutenant!’

‘Why, a lieutenant is a gentleman; and are you not related to one of the First Lords of the Admiralty?’

‘Yes. But he won’t put me over the heads of my betters. All that sort of thing is gone by.’

‘You need not say that. Say you are cousin to the First Lord, and then stop; that is the way to talk to a mayor; la, look at me, telling him what to say—as if I cared. There now—here comes that tittling-tattling Mrs. Dodsley, and her whole brood of children and nurses; she shan’t see what I am doing:’ and Miss Ap Rice marched swiftly into Merlin’s Cave, settled her skirts, and sat down on a stone. ‘Oh!’ said she, with no great appearance of agitation, ‘what a goose I must be! This is the last place I ought to have come to; this is where the lovers interchange their vows—the silly things.’

This artless speech,—if artless it was,—brought the man on his knees to her, with such an outburst of honest passion and eloquent love, that her cooler nature was moved, as it had never

been before. She was half frightened; but flattered, and touched: she shed a tear or two, and, though she drew away the hand he was mumbling, and said he oughtn't, and he mustn't, there was nothing very discouraging in her way, not even when she stopped her ears, and said, 'You should say all this to papa.' As if one could make as hot love to the Mayor, in his study, as to the Mayor's daughter in Merlin's Cave!

She was coy, and would not stay long in Merlin's Cave, after this; but said nothing about going home; so they emerged from the cave, and strolled towards Giltar Point.

Suddenly there issued from the Sound, and burst upon their sight, a beautiful yacht, 150 tons, or so, cutter-rigged, bowling along before the wind 13 knots an hour, sails white as snow, and well set, hull low and shapely, wire rigging so slim it seemed of whip-cord or mermaid's hair.

'Oh, Arthur!' cried Ellen. 'What a beauty!'

'And so she is,' said he, heartily. 'Bless you for calling me "Arthur."'

'It slipped out; by mistake. Come to the Castle Hill. I must see her come right in—Arthur.'

Arthur took Ellen's hand, and they hurried to the Castle Hill; and, as they went, kept turning their heads to watch the yacht's manœuvres; for a sailor never tires of observing how this or that craft is handled; and the arrival of a first-class yacht in those fair, but uneventful, waters, was very exciting to Ellen Ap Rice.

The cutter gave St Catherine's rock a wide berth, and ran out well to the Woolhouse reef; then hauled up and stood on the port tack, heading for her anchorage; but an eddy-wind from the North cliffs caught her, and she broke off; so she stood on towards Monkstone point, then came about with her berth well under her lee, mistress of the situation, as landsmen say.

Arthur kept explaining her manœuvres, and the necessity for them, and, when she came about, said she was well-behaved,—had fore-reached five times her length,—and was smartly handled too.

'Oh, yes!' said Ellen; 'a most skilful captain, evidently.'

This was too hasty a conclusion for the sober Greaves. 'Wait till we see him in a cyclone, with all his canvas on that one stick, or working off a lee shore in a nor'wester. But he can handle a cutter in fair weather, and fresh water, that is certain.'

'Fresh water!' said Ellen. 'How dare you? And don't mock people. I can't get enough fresh water in Tenby to wash my hands.'

'What, do you want them *whiter* than snow?' said Greaves, gloating on them undisguised.

‘Arthur, behave, and lend me the glass.’

‘There, dearest.’

So then she inspected the vessel, and he inspected the white hand that held the glass. It was a binocular; for even seamen, now-a-days, seldom use the short telescope of other days; what might be called a very powerful opera-glass has taken its place.

‘Goodness me!’ screamed Ellen. The construction of which sentence is referred to pedagogues.

‘What is the matter?’

‘The captain is a blackamoor.’

Having satisfied herself of the revolting fact by continued inspection, she handed the glass to Greaves. ‘See if he isn’t,’ said she.

Greaves looked through the glass, and took leave to contradict her. ‘Blackamoor! not he. It is worse. It is a gentleman—that ought to know better—with a beastly black beard right down to his waist-band.’

‘Oh, Arthur, how horrid! and in such a pretty ship.’

Greaves smiled indulgently at her calling a cutter a ‘ship,’ but her blunders were beauties; he was so in love with her.

She took the glass again, and looked and talked at the same time. ‘I wonder what has brought him in here?’

‘To look for a barber, I should hope.’

‘Arthur—suppose we were to send out the new hair-dresser to him? Would it not be fun? Oh!—oh!—oh!’

‘What is it now?’

‘A boat going out to him. Well, I declare—a boatful of dignitaries.’

‘Mercy on us!’

‘Yes; I see Papa—and I see the Secretary of the Cambrian Club—and another gentleman—a deputation, I do believe. No, how stupid I am. Why, the new arrival must be Mr. Laxton, that wrote and told papa he was coming; he is the son of an old friend, a ship-builder. Papa is sure to ask him to dinner; and I ask *you*. Do come. He will be quite a lion.’

‘I am very unfortunate. Can’t possibly come to-day. Got to dine on board the ‘Warrior,’ and meet the Prince; name down; no getting off.’

‘Oh, what a pity! It would have been so nice; you and Captain Laxton together.’

‘Captain Laxton? Who is he?’

‘Why, the gentleman with the beard.’

‘Hang it all, don’t call him a Captain.’

‘Not, when he has a ship of his own?’

‘So has a collier, and the master of a fishing lugger. Besides, these swells are only fair-weather skippers; there’s always a sailing master aboard their vessels, that takes the command, if it blows a capful of wind.’

‘Indeed! then I despise them. But I am sorry *you* can’t come, Arthur.’

‘Are you really, love?’

‘You know I am.’

‘Then that is all I care for. A dandy yachtsman is no lion to me.’

‘We ought to go home now,’ said Ellen, ‘or we shall not have time to dress.’

He had not only to dress, but to drive ten miles; yet he went with her to her very door. He put the time to profit; he got her to promise everything, short of marrying him without papa’s consent, and, as she was her father’s darling, and, in reality, ruled him, not he her, that obstacle did not seem insurmountable.

That evening the master of the yacht dined at the Mayor’s, and was the lion of the evening. His face was rather handsome, what one could see of it, and his beard manly. He had travelled, and cruised, for years, and kept his eyes and ears open; had a great flow of words, quite a turn for narrative, a ready wit, a seductive voice, and an infectious laugh. His only drawback was a restless eye. Even that he put to a good use, by being attentive to everybody in turn. He was evidently charmed with Ellen Ap Rice, but showed it in a well-bred way, and did not alarm her; she was a lovely girl, and accustomed to be openly admired.

Next day, Arthur called on her, and she told him everything, and seemed sorry to have had any pleasure he had not a share in. ‘He made himself wonderfully agreeable,’ said she, ‘especially to papa, and, oh, if you had seen how his beard wagged when he laughed, ha! ha!—and, what do you think, the “Cambrians” have lost no time; they have shot him flying, invited him to their Bachelor’s Ball; ah, Arthur, the first time you and I ever danced together was at that ball, a year ago; I wonder whether you remember? Well, he asked me for the first round dance.’

‘Confound his impudence! What did you say?’

‘I said “no”; I was engaged to the Royal Navy.’

‘Dear girl! And that shut him up, I hope.’

‘Dear me, no. He is too good-humoured to be cross because a strange girl was bespoke before he came; he just laughed, and asked might he follow in its wake.’

‘And you said “yes.”’

'No, I did not, now. And you need not look so cross, for there would have been no harm, if I had; but what I did say, was not "yes," but "hum?" and I would consult my memoranda. Never you mind who I dance with, Mr. Arthur; their name is legion. Wait till you catch me parading the sands with the creatures, and catching cold with them in Merlin's Cave.'

'My own love! Come on the sands, now; it is low water, and a glorious day.'

'You dear goose,' said Ellen. 'What, ask a lady out when it is only one clear day before a ball? Why, I am invisible to every creature but you at this moment, and even you can only stay till she comes.'

'She? Who?'

'Why, the dressmaker, to be sure. Talk of the—dressmaker, and there's her knock.'

'Must I go this moment?'

'Oh no. *Let them open the door to her first.* But of course it is no use your staying whilst she is here. We shall be hours and hours, making up our minds. Besides, we shall be up-stairs, trying on things. Arthur, don't look so. Why the ball will be here with awful rapidity; and I'll dance with you three times out of four; I'll dance you down on the floor, my sailor bold. I never knew a Welsh girl yet couldn't dance an Englishman into a cocked hat; now that's *vulgar*.'

'Not as you speak it, love. Whatever comes from your lips is Poetry. I wish you could dance me into a cocked hat and two epaulettes; for it is not in nature, nor reason, you should ever marry a lieutenant.'

'It will be his fault if I don't, then.'

The door was rattled discreetly, and then opened, by old Dewar, butler, footman, and chatterbox of the establishment. 'The dressmaker, Miss.'

'Well, let Agnes take her up-stairs.'

'Yes, Miss.'

Greaves thought it was mere selfishness to stay any longer now; so he bade her good-bye.

But she would not let him go away sad. She tried to console him. 'Surely,' said she, 'you would wish me to look well, in public. It is *the* ball of Tenby. I want you to be proud of your prize, and not find you have captured a dowdy.'

The woman of society, and her reasons, failed to comfort Lieutenant Greaves; so then, as she was not a girl to accept defeat, she tried the woman of nature; she came nearer him, and said, earnestly, 'Only one day, Arthur!—Spare me the pain of

seeing you look unhappy.' In saying this, very tenderly, she laid her hand softly on his arm, and turned her lovely face and two beautiful eyes full up to him.

A sweet inarticulate sound ensued, and he *did* spare her the pain of seeing him look unhappy; for he went off, flushed, and with very sparkling eyes.

Surely female logic has been underrated, up to the date of this writing.

Greaves went away, the happiest lieutenant in the Royal Navy; and content to kill time till the ball-day. He dined at the club; smoked a cigar on the Castle hill, and entered his lodgings just as the London day mail was delivered. There was a paper parallelogram for him, with a seal as big as the face of a chronometer. Order from the Admiralty to join the 'Redoubtable' at Portsmouth—for disposal. Private note, by the secretary, advising him to lose no time; as he might be appointed flag lieutenant to the 'Centaur,' admiral's ship on the China station, from which quick promotion was sure to follow in the ordinary course of the service.

Before he knew Ellen Ap Rice, his heart would have bounded with exultation at this bright prospect; but now that heart seemed cut in two; one half glowed with ambition, the other sickened at the very thought of leaving Ellen, half won. But those who serve the nation may doubt and fear, but have parted with the right to vacillate. There was but one thing to do—start for London by the fast train next morning at 10 A.M.

He sent a hurried note to Ellen, by messenger, telling her what had occurred, and imploring an interview. His messenger brought him back a prompt reply. Papa was going to Cardiff, in the morning, on business; would breakfast at half-past eight precisely. He must invite himself to breakfast, that night, and come at eight.

He did so, and Ellen came down directly, with the *tear* in her eye. They comforted each other, agreed to look on it as a sure step to a creditable union, and, meantime, lighten the separation by a quick fire of letters. He would write from every port he landed in; and would have a letter for every homeward bound ship they brought to, out at sea, and she would greet him with a letter at every port.

When they had duly sealed this compact, the Mayor came in, and that kept them both within bounds.

But Greaves's prospect of promotion was discussed, and the Mayor showed a paternal interest, and said, 'Come back to Tenby a captain, and we shall all be proud of you, shall we not, Nelly?'

When a father says so much as that to a young fellow, who has

been openly courting his daughter, it hardly bears two meanings; and Greaves went away, brave and buoyant, and the sting taken out of the inopportune parting.

He was soon at Portsmouth, and aboard the 'Redoubtable.'

He was appointed flag lieutenant on board the 'Centaur,' then lying at Spithead, bound on a two years' voyage. Under peculiar circumstances she was to touch at Lisbon, Madeira, and the Cape; but her destination was Hong-Kong, where she was to lie for some time in command of the station.

Next morning, a letter from Ellen; he kissed it devotedly, before he opened it. After some kind things, that were balm to him, she seemed to gravitate towards that great event in a girl's life, the ball. 'I did so miss you, dear; and that impudent Mr. Laxton had the first dance—for of course I never thought of putting anybody in your place; but he would not give up the second, any more for that. He said I had promised. Oh, and he asked me if I would honour his yacht with my presence, and he would take me a cruise round Sunday Island. I said, "No; I was a bad sailor." "Oh," said he, "we will wait for a soldier's wind." What is "a soldier's wind?" When I would not consent, he got papa by himself, and papa consented directly for both of us. I cannot bear such impudent men, that will not take a "no."'

Arthur wrote back very affectionately, but made a point of her not sailing in Laxton's yacht. It was not proper; nor prudent. The wind might fall; the yacht be out all night; and, in any case, the man was a stranger, of whom they knew nothing, but that his appearance was wild and disreputable, and that he was a mere cruiser, and a man of pleasure. He hoped his Ellen would make this little sacrifice to his feelings. This was his one remonstrance.

Ellen replied to it. 'You dear, jealous goose, did you think I would go on board his yacht, the only lady? Of course there was a large party; and you should have seen the Miss Frumps, and that Agnes Barker, how they flung themselves at his head, it was disgusting. But don't you worry about the man, dear. I am sorry I told you. We were back to dinner.'

Then the fair writer went off to other things; but there was a postscript:

'Captain Laxton has called to bid good-bye, and his beautiful yacht is just sailing out of the roads.'

As what little interest there is in this part of the story centres in Miss *Ap Rice's* letters, I will just say that Greaves had one

from her at Lisbon, which gave him unmixed pleasure. It was long, and kind, though not so gay as usual. As for this Laxton, he appeared to have faded out entirely, for she never mentioned his name.

At Madeira Greaves received a letter, shorter and more sprightly. In a postscript she said: 'Who do you think has fallen down from the clouds? That Mr. Laxton, without his yacht. We asked him what had become of her. "Condemned," said he, solemnly. "In the Levant, a Greek brig outsailed her; in the Channel here, a French lugger lay nearer the wind. After that, no more cutters for me." We think he is a little cracked. That odious Agnes Barker will not let him alone. I never saw such a shameless flirt.'

The ship lay eight days at Madeira, and on the seventh day he received another letter, begging him to come home as soon as possible; for she was subject to downright persecution from Captain Laxton; and her father was much too easy. For the first time in her life she really felt the need of a protector.

This letter set Greaves almost wild. She wanted him back to protect her now, and he bound for the East, and could not hope to see her for two years.

Nothing for it but to pace the deck, and rage internally. No fresh advices possible, before the Cape. He couldn't sleep, and this operated curiously; he passed for a supernaturally vigilant lieutenant.

There was a commander on board, a sprig of nobility, a charming fellow, but rather an easy-going officer; he used to wonder at Greaves, and, having the admiral's ear, praised him for a model. 'The beggar never sleeps at all,' said he. 'I think he will kill himself.'

'He will be the only one of ye,' growled the admiral. But he took notice of Greaves—all the more, that a Lord of the Admiralty, who was his personal friend, had said a word for him in one of those meek postscripts, which mean so much, when written by the hand of Power.

At last, they reached the Cape, and dropped anchor.

The mail-boat came out, with letters.

There was none for Greaves.

No letter at all! The deck seemed to rise under him; and he had to hold on by the fore-braces; and even that was as much as he could do, being somewhat weakened by sleepless nights. Several officers came round him, and the ship's surgeon applied salts and brandy, and he recovered, but looked very wild. Then the surgeon advised him to go ashore, for a change. Leave was

been openly courting his daughter, it hardly bears two meanings; and Greaves went away, brave and buoyant, and the sting taken out of the inopportune parting.

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He was appointed flag lieutenant on board the 'Centaur,' then lying at Spithead, bound on a two years' voyage. Under peculiar circumstances she was to touch at Lisbon, Madeira, and the Cape; but her destination was Hong-Kong, where she was to lie for some time in command of the station.

Next morning, a letter from Ellen; he kissed it devotedly, before he opened it. After some kind things, that were balm to him, she seemed to gravitate towards that great event in a girl's life, the ball. 'I did so miss you, dear; and that impudent Mr. Laxton had the first dance—for of course I never thought of putting anybody in your place; but he would not give up the second, any more for that. He said I had promised. Oh, and he asked me if I would honour his yacht with my presence, and he would take me a cruise round Sunday Island. I said, "No; I was a bad sailor." "Oh," said he, "we will wait for a soldier's wind." What is "a soldier's wind?" When I would not consent, he got papa by himself, and papa consented directly for both of us. I cannot bear such impudent men, that will not take a "no."'

Arthur wrote back very affectionately, but made a point of her not sailing in Laxton's yacht. It was not proper; nor prudent. The wind might fall; the yacht be out all night; and, in any case, the man was a stranger, of whom they knew nothing, but that his appearance was wild and disreputable, and that he was a mere cruiser, and a man of pleasure. He hoped his Ellen would make this little sacrifice to his feelings. This was his one remonstrance.

Ellen replied to it. 'You dear, jealous goose, did you think I would go on board his yacht, the only lady? Of course there was a large party; and you should have seen the Miss Frumps, and that Agnes Barker, how they flung themselves at his head, it was disgusting. But don't you worry about the man, dear. I am sorry I told you. We were back to dinner.'

Then the fair writer went off to other things; but there was a postscript:

'Captain Laxton has called to bid good-bye, and his beautiful yacht is just sailing out of the roads.'

As what little interest there is in this part of the story centres in Miss Ap Rice's letters, I will just say that Greaves had one

a good seaman, and a practical gunner, laid low by some young bitch not worth his little finger, I'll be bound.'

Next day he sent for the young man.

'Lettenant Greaves!'

'Sir.'

'Here's a transport going home, and nobody to command her. They have come to me. I thought of sending the second lettenant; it would have been more convenient; for, by Jove, sir, when you are gone, I may have to sail the ship myself. However, I have altered my mind—you will take the troops to Plymouth.'

'Yes, admiral.'

'Then you'd better take a fortnight ashore, for your health. You are very ill, sir.'

'Thank you, admiral.'

'Come out to Hong Kong how you can. You can apply to the Admiralty for your expenses, *if you think it is any use.*'

Greaves's eye flashed, and his pale cheek coloured.

'Ay, ay,' said the admiral, 'I see these instructions are not so disagreeable as they ought to be. A steam-tug and a cargo of lobsters! But you must listen to me: an honest sailor like you is no match for these girls; it is not worth your while to be sick or sorry for any one of them. There—there—send your traps aboard the tub, and clear the harbour of her as soon as you can. She is under your orders, sir.'

'God bless you, admiral,' sobbed Greaves, and retired all in a hurry, partly to hide his emotions, and partly because it is not usual, in the service, to bless one's superiors to their faces. It is more the etiquette to curse them behind their backs.

Now was Greaves a new man; light shone in his eye; vigour returned to his limbs; this most unexpected stroke of good fortune put another face on things. He had the steamboat coaled and victualled with unheard-of expedition; got the troops on board, and steamed away for Plymouth.

They had fair weather, and his hopes rose. After all, Ellen could hardly have taken any irretrievable step; she had never denied his claim on her; a good licking bestowed on Laxton might break the spell, and cool his ardour into the bargain. He felt sure he could win her back somehow. He had been out of sight, when this fellow succeeded in deluding her. But now he should get fair play.

He landed the troops at Plymouth, and made his report; then off to Tenby at once. He went straight to the Mayor's house. A girl opened the door.

'Miss Ap Rice?

'She don't live here, sir, now. Lawk! it is Captain Greaves. Come in, sir, and I'll send Mr. Dewar.'

Greaves went in, full of misgivings; and sat down in the dining-room.

Presently, Dewar came; a white-haired old fellow, who had been at sea in early life, but was now the Mayor's factotum, and allowed himself great liberties.

He came in, open-mouthed. 'Ah, Captain Greaves; it is a bad business. I'm a'most sorry to see you here. Gone, sir, gone, and we shall never see her again, I'm afraid.'

'Gone!—What, run away—with that scoundrel?'

'Well, sir, it did look like running away, being so sudden. But it was a magnificent wedding, for that matter, and they left in a special steamer with a gilt starn, and the flags of all nations a-flying.'

'Married!?'

'You may well be surprised, sir. But, for as sudden as it was, I seen it a-coming. You see, sir, he was always at her, morning, noon, and night. He'd have tired out a saint, leastways a female one. Carriage and four, to take her to some blessed old ruin or other; *she* didn't care for the ruin, but she couldn't withstand the four horses, which they are seldom seen in Tenby. Flowers every day. Hindia shawls; dimond necklace; a wheedling tongue, and a beard like a Christmas fir. I blame that there beard for it. Ye see, Captain, these young ladies never speaks their real minds about them beards. Lying comes natural to them; and so, to flatter a clean respectable body like you or me, they makes pretend, and calls beards o'ious. And so they are. That there Laxton, his beard supped my soup for a wager agin his belly; and, with him chattering so, he'd forget to wipe it for ever so long. Sarved him right if I'd brought him a basin and a towel before all the company. But these young ladies, they don't vally that. What they looks for in a man is to be the hopposite of a woman. They hates and despises their own sect. So what they loves in a man is hunblushing himpudence and a long beard. The more they complains of a man's brass, the more they likes it, and as for a beard, they'd have him look like a beast, so as he looked very unlike a woman, which a beard it is. But, if they once fingers one of them beards, it is all up with 'em. And that is how I knew what was coming; for one day I was at my pantry window, a-cleaning my silver, when Miss and him was in the little garden; seated on one bench they was, and not fur off one another neither. He was a-reading poetry to her, and his head so near her, that I'm blest if his tarnation beard wasn't almost in her lap. Her eyes was turned

up to heaven, in a kind of trance, a-tasting of the poetry; but whiles she was a-looking up to heaven, for the meaning of that there sing-song, blest if her little white fingers wasn't twisting the ends of that there beard into little ringlets, without seeming to know what they was doing. Soon as I saw that, I said, "Here's a go. It is all up with Captain Greaves. He have limed her, this here cockney sailor." For if ever a woman plays with a man's curls, or his whiskers, or his beard, she is netted like a partridge; it is a sure sign. So should we be, if the women's hair was loose; but they has so much mercy as to tie it up, and make it as hugly as they can, and full o' pins; and that saves many a man from being netted, and caged, and all. So soon arter that she named the day.'

Greaves sat dead silent under this flow of envenomed twaddle, like a Spartan under the knife. But at last he could bear it no longer. He groaned aloud, and buried his contorted face in his hands.

'Confound my chattering tongue!' said honest Dewar, and ran to the side-board, and forced a glass of brandy on him. He thanked him, and drank it, and told him not to mind him; but to tell him where she was settled with the fellow.

'Settled, sir?' said Dewar. 'No such luck. She writes to her papa every week; but it is always from some fresh place. "Dewar," says his worship to me, "I've married my girl to the Wandering Jew." Oh, he don't hide his mind from me; he tells me that this Laxton have had a ship built in the north, a thundering big ship—for he's as rich as Cræses—and he have launched her to sail round the world. My fear is, he will sail her to the bottom of the ocean.'

'Poor Ellen!'

'Captain—Captain—don't fret your heart out for *her*; she is all right. She loves the man, and she loves hexcitement; which he will give it her. She'd have had a ball here every week, if she could; and now she will see a new port every week. She is all right. Let her go her own road. She broke her troth to do it; and we don't think much, in Wales, of girls as do that, be they gentle, or be they simple, look you.'

Greaves looked up, and said, sternly, 'Not one word against her, before me. I have borne all I can.'

Old Dewar wasn't a bit offended. 'Ah! you are a man, you are,' said he. Then, in a cordial way, 'Captain Greaves, sir, you will stay with us, now you are come.'

'Me stay here!'

'Ay; why not? Ye musn't bear spite against the old man. *He stood out for you, longer than I ever knowed him stand out*

against her: but she could always talk him over; she could talk anybody over. It is all haccident my standing so true to you. It wasn't worth her while to talk old Dewar over; that is the reason. Do ye stay now. You'll be like a son to the old man, look you. He is sadly changed since she went; quite melancholly; and keeps a-blaming of hisself, for letting her be master.'

'Dewar,' said the young man, 'I cannot. The sight of the places where I walked with her, and loved her, and she seemed to love me—Oh no!—to London by the first train—and then to sea. Thank God for the sea. The sea cannot change into lying land. My heart has been broken ashore. Perhaps it may recover in a few years, at sea. Give him my love, Dewar, and God bless you!'

He almost ran out of the house, and fixed his eyes on the ground, to see no more objects embittered by recollections of happiness fled. He made his way to his uncle, in London, reported himself to the Admiralty, and asked for a berth in the first ship bound to China. He was told, in reply, he could go out in any merchant ship; but as his pay would not be interrupted, the Government could not be chargeable for his expenses.

In spite of a dizzy headache, he went into the city, next day, to arrange for his voyage.

But, at night, he was taken with violent shivering, and before morning was light-headed.

A doctor was sent for, in the morning.

Next day the case was so serious that a second was called in.

The case declared itself—gastric fever and jaundice.

They administered medicines, which, as usual in these cases, did the stomach a little harm, and the system no good.

His uncle sent for a third physician; a rough, but very able man. He approved all the others had done—and did the very reverse; ordered him a milk diet, tepid aspersions, frequent change of bed, and linen, and no medicine at all, but a little bark; and old Scotch whisky in moderation.

'Tell me the truth,' said his sorrowful uncle.

'I always do,' said the doctor, 'that is why they call me a brute. Well, sir, the case is not hopeless yet. But I will not deceive you; I fear he is going a longer voyage than China.'

So may the mind destroy the body, and the Samson, who can conquer a host, be laid low by a woman.

(To be continued.)

Lisa.

I WANDER through a fragrant land
 To see one blossom of the isle,
 To feel the magic of one hand,
 To read the meaning of one smile.

No laughter in the twilight hours,
 No song of lark has theme more gay ;
 No maiden spirit of the flow'rs
 Has sweeter dreams before the day.

Her songs are softer than the wind
 Love-making to the summer leaves ;
 Her murmurs golden loops to bind
 Heart-harvests of the summer eves.

Rare light of dawn is in her eyes,
 A regal pledge of perfect day,
 When secrets now that speak in sighs
 Will find the words that lovers say.

Her heart is like a grove of song ;
 In ev'ry glade new music dwells,
 Till concord of melodious throng
 Seems mellow-throated marriage-bells.

And when the moon and nightingale
 Disrobe the world of care and thought,
 Her presence lifts a final veil,
 And rapture pauses, wonder-wrought.

RICHARD DOWLING

The Homes and Haunts of the Italian Poets.

I. DANTE.

BY T. ADOLPHUS TROLLOPE.

It is impossible to speak or think of 'the Italian poets' without placing at the head of the list the name prefixed to this page. Not even Shakespeare himself, the *facile princeps* of all poets of every time and every clime, stands so pre-eminently above every other name of his countrymen as Dante above all other Italians. Chronology, which also marks his place as the first, might perhaps, for our present purpose, have been disregarded. But it is noteworthy that Italy and the Italian language reached the highest point they were destined to reach (so far, at least, as the history of the subsequent six hundred years has gone) at the first bound! Vigorous and grand leaps were made subsequently, but the mark touched by that first spring has never been reached again!

It is of the *Home* and the *Haunts* of Dante, then, that these pages will treat. But it seems to strike a sad key-note to speak of the *home* of him who had no home—the *home* of Dante the exile, Dante the wanderer, who in the bitterness of his heart wrote those pathetic lines:—

Tu proverai sì come sa di sale
Lo pane altrui, e com'è duro calle
Lo scendere e 'l salir l' altrui scale!¹

Though the home of Dante was, as has been said, nowhere, the *haunts* of the poet were, to his great unhappiness, extremely numerous. There is hardly any district of Italy in which the minute and never-wearying industry of his commentators and biographers has not succeeded in finding traces of his footsteps. He was to the end a wanderer, and one whose heart never ceased to turn to, and to long for, his only true home.

Nel bello ovile, ov'io dormii agnello.²

Let us endeavour, then, to catch such a glimpse of him as we

¹ 'Thou shalt experience how salt is the savour of another's bread; how hard a path the climbing and descending of another's stair!'

I have preferred in this and other quotations to give the literal translation of Dante's words in prose, rather than borrow the necessarily less accurate rendering of any one of his innumerable poetical translators.

² 'In the beautiful fold, where I slept when a lamb.'—*Paradiso*, canto 25, v. 7.

may across the mists of six hundred years, as he was in that well-loved fold, while he had yet a home.

Durante—familiarly, after old Florentine fashion, called Dante, a form he always himself uses—was born in 1265, of the old patrician Florentine family Alighieri, which probably was an offshoot from the more ancient Frangipani of Rome. Much patient learning and much midnight oil have been expended in showing that the name ought to be written Alighieri, and not Allighieri. And we outsiders can but in such a matter follow the latest and now received practice. But the controversy seems to prove, as many another controversy in similar matters, that the old chroniclers and notaries and drawers up of documents wrote the name either way without giving themselves the smallest trouble about the correctness of their spelling. But, as all agree that the name was originally Aldighieri, it might seem probable that the earliest corruption of it was to Allighieri, by a substitution of the *l* for the harder *d*.

On a mid-May day in the year 1265, that wonderful human soul first saw the light of day—six centuries and eleven years ago! Sturdy little Florence, proud of her independence, lord of herself within her narrow walls, and of but a few acres beyond them, was still in that period of her growth when the poet could regret the mixing of the pure blood of her citizens with that of *foreigners* from the neighbouring villages some four or five miles from her walls. But the simplicity of life, which the poet celebrates when—

Firenza dentro della cerchia antica,

Si stava in pace sobria e pudica,¹

did not preserve its inhabitants from constant civil war; and, however *sobria* and *pudica* the old life may have been, it was only that illusion, which makes 'all times seem good when old,' that could lead to the statement that Dante's fellow citizens lived in peace, either among themselves or with the communities, their more immediate neighbours. There is no need to recall the never-ending feuds of Guelphs and Ghibellines—of *Bianchi* and *Neri*. The story is too well known. But it may be as well to remind the reader that, in a general way, the Guelphs were the Whigs of those days, and held for national, i.e., communal, independence under the general protection of the Pope; while the Tory Ghibellines were for admitting the suzerainty of the Empire; and the more far-sighted

¹ Florence, within her ancient circle of wall, remained in peace, sober and modest.—*Paradiso*, canto 15, v. 97. The whole passage, in which the poet describes the *ancient manners*, is well worth referring to—

among them, as our poet, thought that the best hope for Italian independence was to be found in union under the sceptre of the Emperor. For Dante, it may be as well to state at once, was a Ghibelline—the first of his race who was so—the Alighieri having always belonged to the Guelph faction.

Dante's father was Aldighiero degli Alighieri, a counsellor learned in the law, who had served the Republic in various capacities. He was a patrician, as has been said, and is known to have possessed houses and lands, not, however, to any large amount, in various parts of the immediate neighbourhood of the city. The house in which Dante was born is still pointed out, and has an inscribed stone to commemorate the fact. It is situated in the very central part of old Florence, a mark of the ancient *status* of the family. For, as the number of inhabitants claiming citizenship increased, the new-comers established themselves in the less crowded parts near, or on the outside of, the city walls. Between the Piazza della Signoria, the principal *piazza* of the city on the south and the cathedral to the north, and bounded by the large recently constructed artery known as the Via Calzaiuoli on the west and the Via del Proconsolo on the east, there is a square space filled with a labyrinth of little streets and *piazze*, or squares, which are probably less changed since the thirteenth century than any other part of the city. They are now quiet little streets but little frequented, and still less known to foreign visitors. The noisy life of the city rolls by in the streets which have been named; and these dreamy little streets, all queer angles and irregularities, seem shunted off the lines on which all movement is going on. Doubtless such was far from being the case in the days when Dante was born there. For these streets and little squares were in the very heart of the city, and the life-pulse must have been beating strongly there. Dante's father Aldighiero, the old lawyer, died in either 1274 or 1275 (the researches of the antiquaries have not been able to discover with certainty the exact date), and the boy Dante was thus either nine or ten years old when he was left to the care of his mother, Bella. What other name that lady bore, or what family she belonged to, is not known. She was not the old lawyer's first wife. He had previously married Lapa, the daughter of Chiarissimo Cialuffi, a patrician, by whom he had had one son, Francesco, Dante's half-brother, whose name is found mentioned in conjunction with that of Dante in the notarial record of some payment in the year 1297, but of whom nothing further is known; and one daughter, whose name has not been preserved. Boccaccio, however, has told us that she was married to a Florentine citizen, named Leon Poggi, by whom she had many sons, the eldest of whom

Andrea, Boccaccio seems to have known well. He says¹ that he (Andrew) 'marvellously resembled Dante in the lineaments of his face and in his person, walking, as Dante is said to have done, somewhat stooping. He was a simple uneducated man, but of very good natural disposition, and in his talk and conduct well ordered and praiseworthy. From him, having become intimate with him, I learned much on many occasions of Dante's habits and ways.'

We have no dates remaining which can guide us with certainty in the matter; but it seems probable that the old lawyer, Dante's father, married the second wife, who became the poet's mother, only nine or ten years before his own death, when he was well stricken in years. And it is, perhaps, permissible to conjecture that the nameless wife of the old man's latter days was not, as his first wife had been, whose name and family are duly recorded, of patrician rank, but a daughter of the people. Be this, however, as it may, the remarkable resemblance between Dante and his nephew by his half-sister, recorded by Boccaccio, would seem to prove that in this case the great man was his father's rather than his mother's child, in contradiction to the course of things which is generally supposed to be the usual one.

Authentic records tell us that in the quiet and remote little street, in which 'the house of Dante' is now pointed out to the curious, were situated the 'Case degli Alighieri,' in the plural—the houses of the Alighieri family. And this is in accordance with that which is constantly met with in old Florentine writings when the residence of any patrician family is spoken of. The old Florentine life was essentially a clannish one. The family tie was immensely strong. And the younger and collateral branches of a stock did not swarm off into other hives, but continued to abide by the old local habitation, which was in Florentine minds indissolubly connected with the name, finding accommodation under the ancestral roof, and, when that would no longer suffice, in houses adjoining it. And thus the residence of every family of patrician standing was almost invariably spoken of in the plural number. Now a recent biographer of Dante, Signor Fraticelli, remarks (without sufficient reason, as it seems to me) that inasmuch as the house in question and two or three adjoining houses were all the 'Case degli Alighieri,' and that one now specially designated as the house in which the poet was born is smaller and of less pretension than its immediate neighbours, it is not likely that Dante was born within those walls. So many circumstances, however, may have happened to cause the building in question to have been the one in which Donna Bella gave birth to her son, that there does not

¹ In the eighth book of his Commentary on Dante.

seem to be any sufficient ground for setting aside a tradition which is essentially of the nature of those which deserve to be trusted.

The house, like most of those in the quarter in which it stands, seems to have undergone very little alteration. Nevertheless, it would perhaps be too much to assume that we see it altogether as Dante knew it as his first and only home. It is the opinion, however, of the archæologists, who have considered the question with all that minute attention which Italians have for some few generations past given to every detail connected with the life of their greatest poet, that the small arched stone doorway of the house is absolutely the same, and in the condition in which it was, when the 'sommo poeta' in his childhood passed so often beneath it. In any case, there in that little street was Dante's earliest 'haunt.' There, with the towers (long since demolished) of other patrician families around him, he first learned to distinguish the Guelph form of battlement from that which marked the towers of the Ghibellines, and first drank in with his mother's milk the lessons of partisan hate and civil war. Nor (though in later life his perception of what he deemed to be the interest of Italy caused him to go over from the Guelph politics of his family to those of the Ghibellines) can it be denied that those lessons fell on a soil unfitted to receive them. The great poet was unquestionably one of those men whom Samuel Johnson loved—a good hater! And those who remember how every page of his immortal poem is steeped in the passions generated by the party politics of his native city, how every award of Paradise, or of Purgatory, or of Hell in those wondrous pages is based on those rancours of civil strife with which the heart of the exiled poet was saturated, will readily picture to themselves the schooling which the young Florentine was receiving, even in those earliest years, from all that surrounded him, from the names of the neighbouring houses and families, and even from the shapes of the frowning buildings, which gave the ancient city the appearance of a fortress.

But there was near at hand—scarcely a stone's throw off from the house in question if the thickly packed intervening buildings had been removed—another haunt of the youthful Dante at a somewhat later day, which has continued to be celebrated as such even to the present day. The world, I take it, has no second instance to offer of a spot of earth—absolutely a simple spot of ground—having been noted, remembered, and celebrated for more than six hundred years solely and entirely because a certain man was in the habit of seating himself just there! This has happened with regard to a spot at the southern limit of the 'Piazza del Duomo,' which, as has been said, is a little to the northwards of the *Alighieri*

houses. Near the base of the wall of a house facing the southern side of the Duomo in that position will be found a marble slab, with the words, 'Il Sasso di Dante,' cut in large letters on it. 'The Stone of Dante!' It is not quite truly the stone of Dante, for it is a new stone and a modern inscription. But it marks exactly the spot where the youthful poet—

Nourishing a youth sublime

With the fairy tales of science and the long results of time—

was wont to sit and contemplate the rising walls of that magnificent cathedral, which, planned by the genius of Arnolfo, were to be subsequently crowned with the finest dome the world has ever seen by Brunelleschi. To the Florentine community which had commanded its architect to raise for the city such a temple as the world had never yet seen, the progress of the great work was a matter of intense interest. And Dante was a Florentine of the Florentines. But we shall be pretty safe not to err in picturing to ourselves the reveries of the poet, as occupied with musings far dearer to him than even those inspired by the poem in stone before his eyes.

From the close of his ninth year Dante was a lover! We may dismiss once for all the entire mass of fine-drawn speculations as to the symbolic purport of the Beatrice of many passages in Dante's writings. It is very possible that the poet may have, especially after death had robbed him of her, mingled the fancies of allegorical impersonations with his thoughts of his lost love, after the fashion of the time. But there is no room for the smallest doubt that the Beatrice of his passion was a real girl, really loved by him hopelessly.

It was towards the end of his ninth year that his father took him on the 1st of May to a festival in the house of their wealthy neighbour, Folco Portinari. There were a number of other children present, and among them the daughter of the host, Beatrice, who was then just entering her ninth year. Boccaccio, as well as others of the earliest commentators and biographers, has told us the whole story of this love at first sight. And the description he gives of the manner and character of the little lady, as well as of her beauty, is such as satisfactorily to explain the influence she exercised over the boy poet. Her manner and mode of speaking, we are told, were far more graceful, reserved, dignified, and modest than could have been expected from her age. There was also an expression of purity and innocence in her features so remarkable that it was commonly said that she was more like an angel than a mortal child. Dante went home from that May-day gathering with

an image in his heart that never more to the day of his death left it. We know from sundry passages of his sonnets that his love was not returned; and, had it been so, the result could only in all probability have been to add her sighs to his. For Folco Portinari was one of the wealthiest citizens of Florence, and his daughter was in due time married into an equally rich family—that of the Bardi. But she died at four-and-twenty, and became thenceforth for Dante the half-mystic personage of the *Vita Nuova*.

The early poetical efforts which were inspired by this hapless but most fruitful passion, had the immediate effect of obtaining for the youthful poet the friendship of several of the most distinguished men of his country and time. It was upon this occasion that he became acquainted with Guido Cavalcanti, whom long afterwards¹ he called his ‘primo amico,’ and whose father he represents himself as finding in hell, ‘per altezza d’ingegni,’—i.e., for doctrinal infidelity—a curious manifestation of the nature of the poet’s mind and of his modes of thought! Cino da Pistoia, a learned jurisconsult and elegant poet, replied to Dante’s sonnet by another; and that the greater and the lesser poet remained fast friends is attested by the former in more than one passage of the treatise ‘De Volgari Eloquio.’ The name of Lapo Gianni is perhaps less well known than that of the other two friends at the present day. But he, too, was a ‘gentile poeta,’ much esteemed in his day, though possibly his contemporaries may have known him better in his character of a notary. That Dante regarded him as one of the nearest of his friends is sufficiently shown by the sonnet addressed to Cavalcanti, beginning—

Guido, vorrei che tu e Lapo ed io
Fossimo presi per incantimento.
E messi ad un vascel, ch’ ad ogni vento
Per mare andasse a voler vostro e mio;²

so that, the sonnet goes on, neither misfortune nor rough weather should cross us, but, so living always together, the desire of remaining together should increase. And our mistresses, Monna Vanna and Monna Bice, should by the good enchanter’s will be with us—

E quivi ragionar sempre d’amore
E ciascuna di lor fosse contenta,
Siccome io credo che saremmo noi.³

And in the treatise on the ‘Volgari Eloquio’—the vulgar tongue,

¹ *Vita Nuova*, sec. 3.

² ‘Guido, I would that you and Lapo and I were seized by enchantment and put into a vessel that should wander over the ocean, at your wills and mine.’

³ ‘And our discourse be evermore of love; and each of them (i.e., the ladies) should be content, as, I fancy, we also should be.’

i.e., the ancient Italian (book i. chap. 13)—he enumerates all three of those friends among the masters of it.

There is abundant evidence remaining to show that Dante, though left to the care of a widowed mother when he was barely in his tenth year, received the best and most liberal education that the times and the most intellectually civilised city of those times in all the world could bestow. The first master of his more advanced studies seems to have been Brunetto Latini,¹ one of the most eminent scholars and writers of his day. He instructed his pupil in the whole circle of the 'scibile,'—all that was then deemed knowable by the human mind,—and evidently inspired him with a very strong affection, which is none the less strongly expressed from the fact that Dante meets him in hell.² He is placed there, on account of the irregularity of his life, by the poet's inexorable theological morality; but none the less does Dante express his 'reverence' and affection for him. And it is remarkable enough, as an indication of Dante's ways of thought and speculation, that very many of those whom he meets in hell express amid their agonies the most admirable and excellently moral sentiments! Brunetto's spirit thus addresses him:—

Se tu segui tua stella,
Non puoi fallire a glorioso porto,
Se ben m'accorsi nella vita bella.
E io non fossi sì per tempo morto
Veggendo il cielo a te così benigno
Dato t'avrei all' opera conforto.³

Dante, in return, tells him that, could his wishes avail, he would not remain in pain:—

Che in la mente m'è fitta, ed or m'accuora
Le cara e buona immagine paterna
Di voi, quando nel mondo ad ora ad ora
M'insegnayate come l'uom s'eterna:
E quanto io l'abbo in grado, mentr' io vivo,
Convien che nella mia lingua si scerna.⁴

Dante, however, had probably other teachers. He acquired, as

¹ Born in 1220, and thus forty-five years Dante's senior, he was exiled from Florence with the Guelph party after the defeat of Montaperti; went to France, where he wrote in French the work he is best known by, his *Tresor*; returned to his country in 1266 or 1267, became secretary to the Republic, and died in Florence in 1294.

² *Inferno*, canto 15, v. 30, *et seq.*

³ 'If thou followest thy star, thou canst not fail of a glorious port, if rightly I judged while yet dear life was mine. And had I not died so soon, I, seeing Heaven so propitious to you, would have encouraged you to the work.'

⁴ 'For fixed in my mind, and now saddening me, is thy dear and good paternal image, when continually in the world thou taughtest me how man makes himself immortal. And how much I shall love you, while I live, it is right that my words should show.'

there is evidence to show, considerable skill in drawing; and there is reason to believe that he was not ignorant of music. Here is Boccaccio's account of his youthful years:—

‘But leaving his infancy, during which, however, many signs of the future glory of his intellect were discernible, I must mention that from his early boyhood, having already acquired the first elements of a liberal education, he did not, according to the fashion of noble youths of the present day, abandon himself to youthful dissipation; but in his native city gave himself up to the continual study of the liberal arts, in which he became wonderfully skilled. And as his good dispositions and his intelligence increased with his years, he applied himself not to lucrative pursuits, as do most people nowadays, but to a laudable ambition for lasting fame; and, contemning transitory riches, he gave himself wholly up to the desire of acquiring a complete knowledge of poetry and its methods. To which end he became very familiar with Virgil, Horace, Ovid, Statius, and all the most famous poets.’

But these happy youthful days, passed amid friends and congenial study in the ‘*bel ovile*,’ which he loved with so endearing a love, were not destined to last long. The evil days of the outbreak of civil strife were at hand. The faction of the Ghibellines, which had been driven out of the city by the temporarily victorious Guelphs, were continually endeavouring to make their way back to their houses and homes by allying themselves with any enemy of Florence by whose aid they might overturn the government of the opposite faction, and inflict on them the misfortunes they were themselves suffering from. Thus was fought in 1289 the great battle of Campaldino, in which the Guelphs utterly defeated the Ghibellines and their allies, the men of Arezzo. Dante fought in the victorious ranks, and mentions the fact in one of his letters. Having thus served his country in the field, he for the next ten years served her faithfully as a magistrate and a diplomatist. He obtained all the public offices in due order, and in 1300, the thirty-fifth year of his age, he served the office of ‘*Priore*.’ Boccaccio, speaking of this—the only happy and prosperous period of his life—says: ‘In his discharge of the public offices, so great was his good fortune, that no embassy was listened to, or any reply made; no law was reformed, no peace was made, no war was undertaken; and, in a word, no counsel of any sort determined on without his advice.’ This account is that of an ardent friend in an inaccurate-speaking age, and must no doubt be taken with a grain or two of salt. But there is no reason to doubt that Dante was during these years a trusted and highly valued public servant, and that the Piazza della Signoria and Arnolfo's new palazzo, still the ornament

of it, were among the constant haunts of the statesman poet, who was obtaining that knowledge of the institutions and interests of his country, which compelled his conscience to take the patriotic line of conduct which led to his ruin and exile.

To give with any satisfactory completeness the story of the causes which led Dante to desert his party—the Guelphs—and to incur the deadly hate of the leaders of it, and thus to meet the misfortunes which embittered the whole of his subsequent life, would need a length of exposition very much greater than can here be given to it. It must suffice to say that the Guelph party, having become dominant in the State, had greatly deteriorated in virtue and patriotic feeling; that the leaders had made themselves so hateful to the people that the city was on several occasions convulsed by riot and rebellion; and that the party itself was divided into two parties by an irremediable schism, the more moderate party still looking to the Pope as their head, while a more violent faction wished for the assistance and protectorate of the French king. These were the ‘Neri,’ but too well known to every reader of Florentine history; and their purpose of invoking the aid of Carlo, the French king’s brother, to ‘reform’ the city—i.e., to supply them with sufficient military power to enable them to crush their adversaries, the ‘Bianchi,’ entirely, and obtain entire command of the city for themselves—was drawing to a head in the months of 1300, during which Dante served the office of ‘Priore.’ He perceived all the fatal results of such a measure, and opposed it successfully for a time. But the violence of the ‘Neri,’ who were in every respect the violent and unscrupulous party, prevailed; the Frenchman was invited to Florence, and, as usual in that commonwealth of good haters, ‘Væ victis’ was the cry with which the victorious party came into power. Dante was accused of peculation and embezzlement during his term of office, and was condemned on the testimony—as stated in the words of the still extant sentence pronounced against him—of ‘public report which has come to our ears,’ to be exiled for ever from the territory of Florence, to confiscation of all his property of every kind, and to death by burning alive if he should ever, by returning, place himself in the power of the commonwealth. ‘The world,’ says Henry Taylor, speaking by the mouth of Van Artevelde, ‘the world knows nothing of its greatest men!’ But it unfortunately often knows enough of them to persecute, stone, crucify, and burn them.

This iniquitous sentence was pronounced in 1302; and Dante went forth from the ‘bel ovile,’ and from all that made life pleasant *o him*, with that undying bitterness in his heart with which every

line of his subsequent writing is saturated. And then began that life of wandering which led him, as he says, a wandering mendicant through every part of Italy. Nothing that the most minute investigation and patient industry could accomplish has been left undone in order to trace the steps of the wandering exile; and in a great measure these efforts have been successful. Very numerous are the cities, castles, courts, convents, in which Dante is known to have been for a longer or a shorter time present. But any attempt to follow him step by step to every spot which was one of his temporary *haunts* would occupy a space far greater than is compatible with the limits of the present paper. We must content ourselves with looking at him in those places in which he abode the longest, and with those surroundings which exercised most influence on his remaining life.

Immediately on shaking the dust off his feet as he quitted the ungrateful city, he seems to have thrown in his lot with his fellow exiles of the party of the Bianchi, whom, together with Dante himself, their exile and their opposition to the 'Neri' section of the old Guelph party, had turned into Ghibellines. The above phrases seem to give a fair and sufficient account of the Ghibellinism of the general body of the Bianchi, Dante's fellow exiles. But there is abundant evidence in the works of the poet, both in his prose and his verse, that a far larger and more patriotic view, extending itself beyond the horizon of mere Florentine politics to a consideration of the future and best interests of Italy, moved Dante to the Ghibellinism which coloured his political opinions during the remainder of his life. And it may be said, I think without any injustice to any of his contemporaries, that he was the only man of that day in Italy—certainly the only Florentine—whose political purview embraced so large an horizon. The *littérateurs* of every clime and time, the men of thought, may find a just subject of pride in the thought that the next man of whom the same may be said was another of their own body, Francesco Petrarca.

The exiled 'Bianchi,' following the invariable course of Florentine *outs*, sought to find alliances among the enemies of the 'Commune,' which might enable them to return by force of arms. With this view they sought a powerful noble of the Ubaldini, who possessed a strong castle in the Mugello, the valley among the Apennines which lies behind the hill of Fiesole. This castle (became the head-quarters and stronghold of the exiles, with whom was Dante) the Florentines besieged fruitlessly for four months. Winter was coming on; and if the besieged could have held out a little longer, help would have come to them, and the

Florentine host would have been baffled. But, as usual, the Bianchi and their allies began to quarrel among themselves. The Florentine Neri found the means of getting at Ubaldini, made a separate peace with him, bought his castle at a large price, and razed it to the ground. It was then that Dante separated himself for ever from the 'foolish and malignant' crowd, as he himself calls them, which had thus shown that no reliance could be placed on them, and went his way *alone*!

He betook himself apparently first to Padua, where he certainly was on August 27, 1306, for his name appears as witness to a contract signed there on that day. But shortly afterwards (certainly on October 6 in that year) he was in the Lunigiana¹ with his friend the Marchese Malespina. And his stay was marked by an incident which must not be omitted.

When the populace plundered Dante's house in Florence after the promulgation of the sentence against him which has been recorded, his wife,² having reason to foresee such a catastrophe, succeeded in putting a number of valuables into some boxes, and causing them to be conveyed to a place of safety. Subsequently, in the year 1307, when the decree confiscating all his property was rescinded, and his wife was endeavouring to recover by legal process some possessions which had been violently appropriated at the time of the exile of the 'Bianchi,' it became necessary to produce certain papers which were among the things which she had sent away in the boxes that had been saved, as has been told. In this need she called to her aid that Andrea, the half-nephew of Dante, who has been mentioned, and from whom Boccaccio received the narrative of this circumstance, and begged him to go where the boxes were, and search for the necessary deeds. Andrea did so; and, in searching for these papers, found likewise several sonnets and *canzoni*, and the first seven cantos of the great poem, 'which, though he could not much understand them,' says Boccaccio, 'he thought were very beautiful.' So he carried them to Dino Frescobaldi, a famous poet of the day,

¹ The district around the ancient and no longer existing city of Luni. It is situated on the coast of the Mediterranean to the south of Spezia.

² Dante in the year 1292 married Gemma Donati, he being then in his twenty-seventh year. If I mention only thus cursorily in a note so important a fact in a man's life, I do but follow in my silence his own example and that of his biographers. It is little indeed that we hear of her in connection with him. Boccaccio says, indeed, that from the time of their first parting he never would go where she was, or suffer her to come to him; and Moretti, another early biographer, compares her to Xantippe. But, as Signor Fraticelli remarks, though it is true that no mention of her can be found in all his works, the fact that she bore him seven children in ten years—i.e., the ten that elapsed from the date of his marriage to that of his exile—does not look as if they had not lived on affectionate terms. The fact remains that she seems to have made no attempt (either by her will or his) to follow him in his exile.

to ask his opinion of them. Dino pronounced them to be works of the highest merit and importance; and, having succeeded in discovering where Dante then was, recommended that they should be sent to the Marchese Malespina, with the request that he would give them to Dante, and persuade him to continue and complete so noble a poem. The papers were accordingly sent into the Lunigiana to Malespina, who restored them to the exiled poet, urging him to resume the task he had abandoned. To which Dante replied that in truth he had supposed that these papers had been finally lost when his house was sacked; but that, since it had pleased God that they should be restored to him, he would endeavour to complete the work according to his first intention. Such is the story told by Boccaccio.

Recent writers on Dante, Carlo Troya, and Fraticelli, have sought to discredit this story related by Boccaccio. The former declares it to be monstrously improbable that 'so great a poem, the ambition and the supreme effort of a life,' should have been left, 'like a vile rag,' locked up in a box, and that Dante should never have enquired after it or sent for it by letter. Fraticelli finds a difficulty in believing that five years could have elapsed before Dante's wife, Gemma, made the attempt to recover at least the property of her dower. For my own part, I see no reason whatsoever to discredit Boccaccio's statement. Signor Troya seems scarcely to realise sufficiently the nature and circumstances of an escape from a city while the populace are sacking your house, and you are leaving a condemnation to death by fire behind you. Things dearer than even a poet's manuscripts to a poet's heart are apt to be forsaken under such circumstances. And as to no subsequent enquiry having been made for it by Dante, it is quite accounted for by his own simple and extremely natural and probable statement. He took it for granted that these writings had perished in that terrible hour of confusion, hurry, and violence when the populace was sacking his house. And with regard to the objection of Signor Fraticelli, it must be remembered that it was not till the government of Florence had passed into other hands, and party passions had had time in a certain measure to cool down, that there was the smallest chance for the exile's widow to obtain a hearing for her pleading. Add to that 'the law's delay,' assuredly not less in that Italian community than elsewhere, and it seems to me that the five years' delay is quite sufficiently accounted for. Moreover, the opening words of the eighth canto of the '*Inferno*,' '*Io dico sequitando*,' seem very remarkably to indicate the resumption of an interrupted composition. To which it may be added that if the often-quoted words with which the great poem opens, '*Nel*

mezzo del commin di nostra vita,' are to be taken, as most commentators suppose, to indicate, in accordance with the poet's usual literal exactitude in such matters, the thirty-fifth year of life, it would exactly tally with this statement to suppose that the poem must have been begun some short time before his exile. He was thirty-five in 1300, and was exiled in 1302.

On January 8, 1311, Dante was in Milan on an occasion which will be mentioned presently. That he wandered much and far during the years which intervened between 1307 (when, as we have seen, he was the guest of the Malespina family in the Lunigiana) and 1311 is undoubted. But the places he visited cannot be stated with certainty, and still less is it possible to trace chronologically the course of his travel. On two different occasions he seems to have been in the Casentino, that lovely valley of the Upper Arno, which, lying between the main backbone of the Apennines and the subsidiary range, which Italian geographers call the Ant-apennine, extends from the Monte Falterona, from whose flanks both the Arno and the Tiber descend, to the little town of Bibbiena, somewhat to the north of Arezzo. Arezzo was the main rallying-point at that time of the Florentine exiles, and Dante's presence in the Casentino was probably connected with their plans for obtaining restoration to their homes by overturning the existing government of Florence. More interesting to us are the traces to be found in the great poem of the impression made upon him by that charming district.

The passage in the 'Inferno' is well known (canto 30, v. 58) in which the poet relates the story of Adam the coiner, a Brescian who, having been employed by the Count of Romena to falsify the Florentine sequin in his castle of Romena, the ruins of which may yet be seen near the little town of Prato Vecchio in the Casentino, was condemned by the injured Republic to be burned alive. 'Li ruscelletti,' says the soul in pain of the coiner—

Li ruscelletti, che de' verdi colli
Del Casentin discendon giuso in Arno,
Facciendo i lor canali freddi e molli,
Sempre mi stanno innanzi.¹

The features of the scene which he mentions, the exactness of which any traveller in that region will at once recognise, are precisely those which would especially strike a Florentine. The character of the Casentino is markedly different from that of the lower valley of the Arno, especially in its greater richness in water, and consequently greater verdure. The mountains which enclose

¹ 'The little rills that from the green hill-sides of the Casentino descend into the Arno, making their channels cool and soft, are ever before my eyes.'

it are less denuded of wood, and the whole aspect of the country is more lush and fresh. Dante's mind and heart, one would have thought, must have been full of other things than the charm of the sylvan and pastoral scene around him, when he was journeying in the Casentino, with a condemnation to the stake behind him, on such errands as those which took him there! Yet the poet nature asserted itself and stamped the scene indelibly on his mind's eye!

It is certain that, as it became evident that the Ghibelline cause was for the present at all events a lost one, Dante determined to pass the Alps, and that he went to Paris in the spring of 1309. Giovanni Villani and his nephew, Filippo Villani, both testify to the fact. The latter says: 'He studied sacred literature at Paris, where on many occasions he gave proof in the public disputations of the excellence of his genius and the perfection of his memory.' Boccaccio also tells us the same thing. Some of his biographers have believed that he went also to Oxford. Nor is there wanting evidence on which to base such an assertion. Boccaccio in a letter in Latin verse, written to Petrarch to ask of him the loan of a copy of the '*Divina Commedia*' which he had made, says that Dante had visited Paris '*extremosque Britannos*.' And Giovanni of Serravalle, Bishop of Fermo, who lived about a century after Dante, says, in his commentary on the '*Divina Commedia*,' that Dante studied theology both in the university of Oxford and at that of Paris, and that he received the degree of bachelor of divinity in the latter university, and would have taken his doctor's degree in the same faculty but that he had not the money to pay the necessary expenses. But it may be doubted whether Boccaccio's statement about the '*extremos Britannos*' may not have been a mere poetical flourish, as one says 'to the ends of the earth;' and whether the more prosaic assertion of the bishop may not have been based solely on the passage in Boccaccio.

That these years were spent by Dante in foreign wanderings there can be no doubt. But when Henry of Luxembourg was elected Emperor mainly by the influence of Pope Clement the Fifth, to the exclusion of Carlo the Landless, the brother of Philip of France, thus raising all Ghibelline hopes throughout Italy, and inflicting a great blow and discouragement on all the Guelph and French party, Dante, full of hope and expectation, hastened back to Italy, and was in Milan when the Emperor received the iron crown on January 6, 1311. We know that he was there; and we know with what thoughts in his mind and high hopes in his heart he was there. We see him but a moment, however, as a dim figure passing across the field of a magic-lantern, and can hardly succeed

in placing him in the mind's eye in any setting belonging to the Milan of our day. To conceive him—a slender, somewhat stooping figure (he stooped even in his younger days, before he left Florence for ever in his thirty-seventh year)—clad from neck to ankle in the severely simple folds of the Florentine ‘lucco,’ moving with grave and reverent steps across the Piazza at Florence, as he passed to the Palazzo Pubblico, is easier. Helped by the portraiture of Giotto, still visible on the chapel wall of the ‘Bargello’ at Florence, one can see him there amid his own proper surroundings. At Paris, at Milan, he is but an impalpable ghost.

The period immediately following the coronation of Henry of Luxembourg at Milan in 1311 was probably the period of the greatest political activity and importance in Dante's life. He wrote at great length ‘to the princes and peoples of Italy;’ he wrote a very remarkable letter to Henry himself; he wrote an address full of burning eloquence to the Florentines. He wrote also his celebrated treatise ‘Of Monarchy,’ in which he maintains that sovereigns do not receive their authority from the Pope, but, like him, directly from God. As there are two parts in man, the spiritual and the corporeal, so the spiritual and the temporal powers—the Pope and the Emperor—are co-ordinate and naturally independent powers.

His letter to the Emperor contains one of the most bitter and fierce invectives that was ever penned against Florence. He urges Henry not to waste his time in subduing the Lombard cities, but to hasten to attack Florence, ‘the fraudulent fox, the ungrateful viper, the sick sheep which contaminated all the flock.’ It was against Florence that the Emperor should ‘make heavy his strong arm, and crush her head with his heel. For Florence the end of Agag and the fate of the Amalekites should be reserved. It was for Henry to smite and root out these sinners,’ &c. &c.

It will be admitted that Dante was indeed a good hater, and that all the love he had ever borne to his native city had been turned to gall and bitterness by the usage he had received at the hands of the Florentines.

But it was all in vain. Florence, with its irreconcilable Guelphs, would not hear of the Emperor. Henry delayed his southward march till he had subdued the rebellious cities of Lombardy; and, when he did march southwards, went to Rome to receive the imperial crown instead of to Florence. And when at last he did attack that sturdy Republic, his armies broke their teeth against it in vain; and the Emperor died, of malaria fever, it was said, but more probably of more artificially prepared poison, on August 24, 1313, at Buonconvento, between Florence and Siena.

And there was an end to Dante's hopes for the unity and independence of Italy under the imperial crown.

The death of the Emperor, which put an end to so many high hopes, was fatal alike to Dante's aspirations for the regeneration of Italy and to his hopes of restoration to his native city. 'The Emperor being dead,' says Bruni, one of his earliest biographers, 'Dante passed the rest of his life in great poverty, sojourning in various places of Lombardy, of Tuscany, and of the Romagna, under the protection of various signors, till at last he betook himself to Ravenna, where he died.' It is impossible to trace the exact course of his wanderings during the years that immediately followed the Emperor's death. But it seems certain that he was for a while at Gubbio, and for a considerable portion of the period between the years 1313 and 1316 at the Camaldolese convent of Avellana, not far from that city. Here, again, it is more easy to picture to ourselves the disappointed and unhappy poet seeking to hide his sorrow in the depth of this profound solitude than it was to do so in the cities of Milan or of Paris.

Gubbio is a little, remote town on the western slope of the Apennine, where Dante was the guest of the Raffaelli family, and where his retirement could have been only less complete than it was in the neighbouring Camaldolese convent. In subsequent times, indeed, Gubbio became the home of a very highly cultured court, and the scene of a very brilliant court life, when the Dukes of Urbino, making it their second capital, had built a splendid palace there, the ruins of which still make the grey hill-side above the town picturesque. But in Dante's time the two or three steep streets and the little piazza, looking out over the wide expanse below from its one unbuilt side, constituted the entirety of the little city, living and fending for itself within its circuit of grim walls among the Apennines, and showing a hard rind to the rest of the world, like so many another independent little community of those times. The hill-side from which Gubbio looks out over the plain is so steep that the staircase of one of the houses standing in the lower of its two principal streets is at the present day a right of way, which the proprietor cannot close; to enter at his street-door, ascend his stair to the fourth storey, and there pass out through a garret, being by far the shortest way from one part of the town to another. As usual in the case of the Italian mediæval cities, the Piazza is the heart and brain of the little community. One side of the piazza at Gubbio is formed by the Palazzo Pubblico, one of the most remarkable specimens of early mediæval civil architecture in Italy, which is still standing as it stood in Dante's day. The piazza, as in all similar cases, was the place of resort for the citizens, for meeting

each other, for business, for chat, or for mere lounging, '*per pigliare il fresco*'—'to get a mouthful of fresh air!' And here Dante has often paced. Often, no doubt, he came to the Palazzo Pubblico, at the request of the city rulers to give counsel, or to be the medium of communication with other sovereign States. But oftener still, probably, he came merely to pace up and down by the side of the low parapet wall, over which he could gaze upon the wide expanse of country below, a melancholy moody man, now meditating on the untoward fate which, at Henry of Luxembourg's death, had destroyed all his hopes and plans for Italy; and now again building the lofty rhyme, which was to consign to an infamy as immortal as the hell to which it condemned him, some one of the enemies who were to the poet's mind the accursed causes of his own misfortunes and of their country's ruin.

Retired and remote enough, one might have thought, was the life of that little mountain city among the Apennines. But the sick heart and morbidly suffering mind of the unhappy poet seem to have required some yet deeper solitude and some surer refuge from those converging eyes of the little world around him, which his reputation unfailingly attracted, and which his misfortunes and his dependent position rendered intolerable to him.

High among the sterile mountain-tops above Gubbio there was a Camaldolese monastery called Avellana, the last monks of which were driven from their mountain home but the other day. St. Peter Damiano was a monk of that community, and he, when interrogated by Dante in Paradise, thus describes the spot:—

Tra due liti d'Italia surgon sassi
E non molto distante alla tua patria
Tanto, che i tuoni assai suonan più bassi,
E fanno un gibbo, che si chiama Catria,
Disotto al quale è consecrato un ermo,
Che suol esser disposto a sola latria.¹

The description of the place, like all Dante's similar topographical identifications, is perfectly accurate. It is an utterly desolate spot, swept by every wind that careers across the peninsula from the one sea to the other, and the winter climate there is a terribly rigid one. There, at least, among those recluses, whose more severe rule excludes all speech save for the purposes of divine worship, and who lived, in truth, the world forgetting, by the world forgot, Dante was free, so far as bitter memories would permit

¹ 'Between the two shores of Italy (the Mediterranean and the Adriatic) and at no great distance from your country (i.e., from Florence;—though that city must not be far short of a hundred miles away), the rocks rise to such a height, that the sound of the thunder below them is far less loudly heard, and form a hunchback mount, which is called Catria; below which there is a consecrated hermitage wholly devoted to the service of God.'—*Paradiso*, canto 21, v. 106.

him, to give himself up wholly to the imaginings of things which mortal eye had never seen, nor mortal fancy shadowed forth. How long he abode in the convent at Avellana it is now impossible to say. But that he dwelt there is certain; the cell, which uninterrupted tradition, a very sure guide in such a community, has always pointed out as his, may still be seen; and the long inscription on the wall of it, placed there by a subsequent abbot in 1557, which declares that Dante there composed a portion of his poem, may well be credited.

It was from Avellana, in all probability, that he wrote his celebrated letter to the Italian cardinals, in conclave at Carpentras for the election of a successor to Clement the Fifth, urging them to elect an Italian, who would restore the seat of the see to Rome. The Italian cardinals would have done so only too gladly if they had had the power. But the French members of the Sacred College were much too strong for them. And the interest of the letter consists in its manifestation of the sentiments and opinions of Dante, showing as it does that, Ghibelline as he was, and strong as was his conviction that the only chance of independence for Italy was to be found in unity under the Emperor, that did not appear to him incompatible with the spiritual pre-eminence and sovereignty of the Roman Pontiff.

Dante's restless spirit, however, would not allow him to remain in the remote mountain solitude of Avellana while the fortunes of Italy were being decided on the plains and in the cities which were spread out far beneath the clouds that floated around his solitary eyrie. He wandered down once more among the busy haunts of men, hovering for a while around the confines of the Florentine territory; at Pisa, the staunchly Ghibelline city; at Lucca, where his friend Uguccone della Faggiuola, the great Ghibelline champion, was for the time supreme, and where Dante, as would appear from a passage in the '*Purgatorio*' (canto 24, v. 37, *et seq.*), became enamoured of a lady of the name of Gentucca, till we find him the guest of the great Scaliger, '*Can Grande*,' at Verona. Unless we are to suppose that the Lucchese lady, Gentucca, followed him to Verona, of which there is no indication, we must conclude that his love affair with her was of too transitory a nature to make any great mark in his life, or detach him from the political and literary preoccupations which filled it. For in the beginning of 1317 he was already the guest of the Scaliger.

It was previous to this, while he was at Lucca apparently, that a communication was made to him from Florence to the effect that his sentence of exile and of death by fire had been reversed, and that he was at liberty to return on certain conditions—that he should

pay a fine, and that he should go as a penitent with a candle in his hand, and the mitre-cap of infamy on his head, to the church of San Giovanni, there to receive a pardon in the same manner and with the same ceremonies with which the vilest criminals were sometimes pardoned. Some of his fellow exiles submitted, and at the cost of infamy returned. Not so Dante! The reply which he sent to the proposal is a very noble one.

‘For,’ he concludes, ‘if Florence cannot be re-entered by a honourable road, I will never enter there more. What! can I not from any corner of the earth admire the sun and the stars? Can I not under any sky meditate on noble truths, if indeed I do not disqualify myself by making myself infamous before the face of the people and city of Florence! Nor, as I trust, will bread be wanting to me.’

As far as can be judged from the splendid tribute of praise with which he has immortalised the memory of Can Grande,¹ his reception at Verona must have been not only a hospitable, but a genially kind and sympathetic, one. And the story told by some of his biographers to the effect that he and his host quarrelled about some uncourteous observation of the prince, and the bitter reply of the poet, seems to be altogether baseless. Why, at the end of about two years, he left Verona for Ravenna, it is impossible now to discover. The fact that he had his eldest and probably others of his sons with him at Verona, would seem to indicate that he had purposed to make that city a more stable abiding-place than any of the many others to which his ceaseless wanderings had taken him. But whether it were that he yielded to the solicitations of his friend, Guido Polentano, the Lord of Ravenna, or whether it were due to the restless unhappiness of his mind, and the habit of wandering which that and his exile had engendered, certain it is that he quitted Verona, and in all probability early in 1330 went to Ravenna, to be the guest of Guido Polentano (the grandson of Francesca da Rimini), as he had been of the Scaliger.²

Ravenna was the last of the ‘haunts’ of the Sommo Poeta, as the Italians almost invariably call him, and saw the close of his earthly pilgrimage. That he was contented—happy, it is to be sure, would be a term not to be used with reference to any portion of his life subsequent (if not to the time of his exile from Florence, at least) to the destruction of his hopes by the death of the Emperor, Henry of Luxembourg!—that he was in a measure contented with Ravenna as a place of rest, would seem to be proved by the reply which he sent to the pressing invitations addressed to him by his old friend Giovanni Del Vergilio to come to Bologna,

¹ *Paradiso*, canto 17, v. 70-90.

there to receive the laurel crown. He expresses wonder that his friend should prefer the 'arid rocks of the Cyclops,' by which he means Bologna, to 'the fertile plains of Pelorus,' by which he means Ravenna, and represents in glowing terms the superiority of his sojourn in the latter place. But perhaps the stronger reason for his refusal may be found in the following touching passage at the beginning of the 25th canto of the 'Paradiso':—

Se mai continga che 'l Poema sacro
 Al quale ha posta mano e cielo e terra,
 Sì, che m' ha fatto per molti anni macro,
 Vinca la crudeltà, che fuor mi serra
 Del bel ovile, ov' io dormii agnello,
 Nimico a' lupi, che gli danno guerra:
 Con altra voce omai, con altro vello
 Ritornero poeta; ed in sul fonte
 Del mio battesimo prendero 'l cappello.¹

It is evident from this passage that he never to the last abandoned all hope of being recalled by his ungrateful country; that he looked for the possibility of such a recall, to his fame as a poet; and that the triumph of the laurel crown, which would have been inexpressibly dear to him when awarded by his native city, had small value for him under other circumstances.

The friendship of Guido Polentano then, and the sojourn at Ravenna, with its splendid memorials of the first centuries of Christianity, and its celebrated and lovely *Pineta*, the forest of stone pines, which shelter it from the blasts of the angry Adriatic, were agreeable to Dante. But that friendship and the climatic character of the district combined were the causes of his death in less than two years from the time of his arrival in Ravenna. The poet had just completed his immortal work, when Venice threatened his host the Lord of Ravenna with hostilities. Guido begged Dante to go to Venice as his ambassador, to endeavour to make terms of peace. The embassy does not seem to have accomplished much; and Dante, not permitted by the churlish animosity of the Venetian Senators to return by sea, was obliged to make the journey by land, through the malaria-smitten marshy plains at the mouths of the Po, in the very midst of the summer heats. He caught the malaria fever, and, despite all that the affectionate care of his host could do to save him, died of it on September 14, 1321, in the fifty-seventh year of his age.

The troubles which shortly overtook Guido prevented him from

¹ 'If ever it should chance that the sacred poem, to which both heaven and earth have contributed, and which for many a year has made me thin, should conquer the cruelty which shuts me out from the dear fold wherein I slept a lamb, enemy as I was to the wolves which make war against it, then with another voice and with another fleece I will return a poet, and receive the crown in the same temple wherein I was baptised.'

carrying into effect his purpose of erecting such a memorial to his illustrious friend as should duly mark his appreciation of him. But that which the Polentano did not live to do, Bernardo Bembo did in 1483, Cardinal Domenico Corsi a second time in 1691; and, lastly, Cardinal Luigi Valenti in 1790 erected the monument which the people of Ravenna still point out with a just pride to strangers.

Florence has within the last few years erected to her disowned son a monument in Santa Croce—the Tuscan Westminster Abbey—as graceless and ugly as her conduct to him, which she can point out with pride to no man! She stoned the prophet whom God had sent to her! She exhibited to the world an example, memorable for ever, of the hatred which the little and the base feel for the great and noble. ‘Dante died,’ as Signor Fraticelli says of him, ‘before he had reached old age, a man unhappy from his youth upwards: first from the loss of the woman he loved; then in the services he would fain have rendered to his country; condemned, persecuted, defamed by his own fellow citizens; unhappy in his dearest hopes for the regeneration of Italy; unhappy in his hope of a return to his home; in poverty, and almost in beggary, a life-long wanderer from city to city!’

Yet it may surely be asserted without fear of errors that these sufferings were the price he had paid for his immortality;—that without them the world would never have possessed that *κτῆμα ἐν αἰεὶ* the ‘Divina Commedia.’



'PERIL AT THE PRINCE OF WALES'S THEATRE.—THE GREEN-ROOM.



A Modern Green-room.

THE fascination which the stage exercises over a large portion of mankind extends to all its belongings. Charles Lamb has celebrated in a never-to-be-forgotten essay the rapture he experienced at his 'first play,' and the species of ecstasy with which he contemplated the uplifting of that curtain which was to him 'a veil drawn between two worlds.' Most playgoers can recall a somewhat similar experience. Not a few are there, indeed, who never lose the freshness of delight, and to whom a theatre remains something like a paradise. It is a well-known fact that an actor's holiday is ordinarily spent in a theatre, and the afternoon performances which during recent years have been established in London, and which seem likely in time to restore the primitive hours of theatrical representations, are crowded with members of what is affectionately called *the* profession. This devotion is not confined to men who have followed the art as a means of livelihood, but extends to those who might be supposed to be most *blasés*. I remember to have seen again and again a display of enthusiasm absolutely boyish on the part of a critic of half a century's standing, to whom every form of theatrical exhibition must have been familiar and commonplace. The playgoer is, in fact, and ought to be, always a child. If he cannot surrender himself to the illusions of stage magic, if he remain 'nothing if not critical,' and reason concerning the origin of his emotions instead of yielding to them, he ceases soon to deserve the name. When, however, he is a playgoer in the full sense of the word, that mimic world retains its fascination, and is for ever

Apparelled in celestial light—

The glory and the freshness of a dream.

We follow the actors with a personal regard such as no other class of men can inspire. Their haunts, their habits, are matters of interest to us, and their death, as Johnson said of Garrick, 'eclipses the gaiety of nations, and impoverishes the public stock of harmless pleasure.'

Whoever has seen the children outside the booths of a fair, striving to find a chink in the canvas through which a glimpse may be obtained of the fairy realm within, and listening to the music that reaches them in maddening strains, will find some

analogy between their proceedings and those of some 'children of a larger growth.' The behind-scenes' life of a theatre is to not a few of us like the circus tent to the child. We know no 'Sesame' that will open its doors, and we are eagerly attent to catch every sound or sight that may reach us from within. It is the few only who know that the attractions of behind-scenes' life exist solely in the imagination of those who are never admitted. It is the wisdom of experience and disenchantment that tells that the work is best seen from the point of view with regard to which it is prepared, and that the attempt to know more than is intended for public exhibition ends always in disappointment.

Theatrical management is now a serious, responsible, and, when successful, most profitable undertaking. The profit from a theatre in the full tide of prosperity rises to many hundreds of pounds weekly. On the other hand, the loss is corresponding. Theatrical affairs seem, indeed, to have undergone some such change as has come over warfare. Battles are short, sharp, and decisive. Two or three defeats involve of necessity the close of a campaign, and leave the vanquished no choice but surrender. When such important interests are at stake, when commercial enterprise and commercial system are at the root of success, it follows absolutely that commercial system will be observed. In the green-room of a well-managed theatre, accordingly, an idler during performance will be about as much in place, and as comfortable, as he would be standing in a busy office and attempting to converse with those at work about him. The entry to the green-room is accorded to those only who come upon business, and an inclination to stay would not be likely to develope itself in the minds of those who contemplated the work around them. To be the only drone in a hive of bees is a position few men would unblushingly maintain for any long space. Matters were otherwise once, when the beaux used to have their seats upon the stage, and smoke their tobacco in the very nostrils of the actors; when a noble Mohawk—

Flown with insolence and wine—

would invade by force the dressing-rooms of the actresses, and inflict, by means of his servant, a beating upon any actor manly enough to stand up for womanhood and his profession. More than one actor was murdered in those evil days of the stage by men who called themselves patrons of the drama. It is painful even now to read of the humiliations to which artists like Molière in France and Garrick in England were exposed at the hands of the powdered and essenced coxcombs who used to claim the right of entry *behind the scenes*, and who held that their own presence upon the

stage was more important than that of the performers. What Garrick felt on being so

Pestered with a popinjay

he shows us in a conversation between *Æsop* and a fine gentleman, which he introduces in his comedy of 'Lethe:':—

Fine Gentleman.—Faith, my existence is merely supported by amusements: I dress, visit, study taste, and write sonnets; by birth, travel, education, and natural abilities I am entitled to lead the fashion; I am principal connoisseur at all auctions, chief arbiter at assemblies, professed critic at the theatres, and a fine gentleman everywhere.

Æsop.—Critic, sir! pray, what's that?

Fine Gentleman.—The delight of the ingenious, the terror of poets, the scourge of players, and the aversion of the vulgar.

Æsop.—Pray, sir (for I fancy your life must be somewhat particular), how do you pass your time; this day, for instance?

Fine Gentleman.—I lie in bed all day, sir.

Æsop.—How do you spend your evenings, then?

Fine Gentleman.—I dress in the evening, and go generally behind the scenes of both Play-houses; not, you may imagine, to be diverted with the play, but to intrigue, and show myself. I stand upon the stage, talk aloud and stare about, which confounds the actors and disturbs the audience; upon which the galleries, who hate the appearance of one of us, begin to hiss, and cry 'Off! off!' while I undaunted stamp my foot—so; loll with my shoulder—thus; take snuff with my right hand and smile scornfully—thus. This exasperates the savages, and they attack us with volleys of sucked oranges and half-eaten pippins.

Long after such scenes of disorder had ceased to be witnessed on the stage, and a prohibition had been obtained against the intrusion of those who were not concerned with the representation, the 'dandies' used to find their way into the green-room. It has been left, however, for the present day to purge the stage of this reproach, and there is not now a green-room in any first-class theatre into which any are admitted except those who have some claim. It is not the least of the obligations we owe to W. C. Macready that his influence and example were always on the side of the reformation of whatever in the conduct of the stage was intrinsically condemnable, or whatever lent itself in the mouth of enemies to purposes of reproach.

Among those who in subsequent days have carried out the reform Macready began are Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft, whose management of the Prince of Wales's Theatre has had an influence altogether incommensurate with the size of the house. To these conscientious artists and energetic managers it is attributable that we have now a school of young actors from whom the highest things are to be hoped, that our performances have an *ensemble* which at one time seemed to be lost to our stage, and that stage decoration has become a fine art. It is but just, when the history

of the stage is written, that these facts should be remembered. At the time when Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft first took possession of the Prince of Wales's Theatre things histrionic were probably at the lowest ebb. In that theatre sprang the current which has since spread itself over London. Much remains yet to be done before acting in England becomes all that it should be. Schools and colleges must be founded, professors must be appointed, and the educational influences of the stage must be raised in all respects, until we accept it as a school of pronunciation and grammar. What progress in this direction has already been made has, however, taken its rise in the room of which a picture is now given. It is a pleasant task to trace the familiar features in the disguise which some of the characters wear. Except Mrs. Bancroft, who does not act in 'Peril,' all the members of the company are *en costume* — Mrs. Kendal as Lady Ormond, Mr. Bancroft as Sir George, Mr. Sugden and Miss Lucy Buckstone, being easily distinguishable. Mr. Arthur Cecil disguised as Sir Woodbine Grafton is not to be recognised except by those who have seen him in the character. To afford too much information would be, however, to interfere with the gratification of those who seek to find out for themselves the various likenesses. The picture will prove a welcome souvenir to all interested in the growth of that stage which, after being England's glory, came to be almost her disgrace, and which now, under such influences as these we preserve, again

Repairs its drooping head.

JOSEPH KNIGHT.

Lucy Hutchinson.

IN certain quarters, exception is taken to the study of classical literature by women, as though a familiar acquaintance with the great writers of ancient times were somehow incompatible with the efficient discharge of domestic duties. There is no reason, however, to suppose that in the days of Queen Elizabeth, or of the Scottish pedants who succeeded to her, English gentlewomen were a whit inferior to their descendants of the present generation in the capacity of wives and mothers. And yet it was then no uncommon thing for the family chaplain to devote a certain portion of each day to giving lessons in Latin and Greek, and even in Hebrew, to the daughters of his patron. A notable instance of this frequent practice may be found in the memoirs of Colonel Hutchinson, written by his deeply attached widow; or, to speak more correctly, in the prefatory fragment which describes the early years of her own anxious life. The very reason she assigns for attempting this autobiographical sketch testifies, in the highest degree, to the humility and practical piety of the accomplished writer. 'I thought,' she modestly urges, as an excuse for her apparent boldness, 'it might be a means to stir up my thankfulness for things past, and to encourage my faith for the future, if I recollected as much as I have heard or can remember of the passages of my youth, and the general and particular providences exercised towards me, both in the entrance and progress of my life.' Lucy Hutchinson was born in the Tower of London, of which her father, Sir Allen Apsley, was governor, on January 29, 1619. Her mother, Lucy, the youngest daughter of Sir John St. John, of Lidiard Tregoofe, Wilts, was the third wife of Sir Allen; and when only sixteen years of age consented to take as her mate a man of forty-eight, and of a grave and austere, though kindly, disposition. In his early youth, however, Sir Allen Apsley had been attracted to the gaming-table, where he quickly lost the little money he possessed. This untoward commencement he fortunately retrieved by his excellent conduct in the famous Cadiz expedition of the Earl of Essex, through whose good offices he obtained a lucrative post in Ireland. Here also he acquitted himself so well that he received the honour of knighthood from James I., and shortly afterwards took for his second wife the daughter of Sir Peter Carew—niece of the Earl of Totnes—who bore him a son and daughter. Upon her death the sorrowing widower resigned his employment in

Ireland, and was appointed Victualler of the Navy, 'a place then both of credit and great revenue.' After a time his friends conceived the idea of finding a third wife for Sir Allen; but the negotiations somehow fell through, and he encountered his fate in a young girl thirty-two years his junior. Happily for both, Miss St. John cared little for social gaieties, and while boarding in the house of a French minister in Jersey had been 'instructed in the Geneva discipline,' which she learned to prefer to what her daughter calls 'our more superstitious service.' Notwithstanding their great disparity of age, this worthy couple were well suited to one another in habits and disposition, and appear to have enjoyed as much happiness as falls to the lot of most married people. Of their ten children, three sons and two daughters survived their father, who died in 1630 of consumption, the seeds of which were sown in the disastrous expedition to the Isle de St. Gré. Of his many excellent qualities his daughter Lucy speaks in terms of the warmest eulogy, and especially notes his aversion from the foppery and gallantry of the day. 'There was nothing,' she says, 'he hated more than an insignificant gallant that could only prune himself, and court a lady, but had not brains to employ himself in things more suitable to man's nobler sex.' Lady Apsley was worthy of her husband, and provided Sir Walter Raleigh and Mr. Ruthin with money for their chemical experiments, and in return obtained much useful information pertaining to the healing art, and also a goodly supply of medicines for the poor, to whom she was, in other respects, exceedingly bountiful. It is added that 'she was a constant frequenter of week-day lectures, and great lover and encourager of good ministers, and most diligent in her private reading and devotions.' This estimable lady died in 1659, at her daughter Lucy's country-seat at Owthorpe, Notts.

In the enumeration of the many blessings attached to her birth, it is not surprising that Mrs. Hutchinson should dwell emphatically on the immense advantage of being the child of such pious and virtuous parents; though she is scarcely less thankful for being born neither at the midnight of papistical superstitions nor in the twilight that succeeded to that thick darkness, but 'when the sun of truth was exalted in his progress and hastening towards a meridian glory.' She further rejoices, 'both upon spiritual and outward accounts,' in the privilege of being an Englishwoman, and derives gratification from 'the happiness of the soil and air,' as well as from 'the celebrated glory of this isle's inhabitants.' 'Britain,' she exclaims, 'hath been as a garden enclosed, wherein all things that man can wish to make a happy life are planted and grow in her own soil; and whatsoever foreign countries yield

to increase admiration and delight, are brought in by her fleets.' Not being forced to toil for their daily bread, the people, she continues, have applied themselves to more generous pursuits; and have thus acquired no mean reputation as valiant warriors. The system of government, too, is commended as being fenced against tyranny, faction, and confusion, though it has been found that no bounds suffice to restrain the ambition of princes. Englishmen have been eminent in all the arts and sciences, especially in those of navigation, agriculture, and archery; while their learning, wit, justice, wealth, and bounty have been acknowledged by all peoples. Above all, 'their piety and devotion to God and His worship hath made them one of the most truly noble nations in the world.' It must, in truth, be admitted that the Puritans, with all their defects and excesses, loved their country, after their own fashion, with an honest pride and heartiness.

Though a denouncer of superstition in others, Lucy Hutchinson was not altogether devoid of that weakness herself. She evidently attached a certain importance to dreams, and particularly mentions one dreamed by her mother shortly before her birth. Lady Apsley fancied that she was walking in a pleasant garden with her husband, when a star descended from heaven and alighted in her hand. According to Sir Allen, this prodigy foreshadowed the advent of a daughter of extraordinary eminence, and both parents were studious to fulfil the omen or prediction, by bestowing upon their child the best education the times could afford. The seed was sown upon a fruitful soil. When only four years of age, Mrs. Hutchinson protests she was able to read fluently, and was often taken to hear sermons which her wonderful memory enabled her to repeat on her return home with surprising accuracy; and, 'being caressed, the love of praise tickled me and made me attend more heedfully.' By the time she had attained her seventh year she had eight different tutors, who instructed her in ancient and modern languages, music, dancing, writing, and needlework. Of reading she was passionately fond, but for the sake of her health that enjoyment was carefully restricted. 'After dinner and supper,' she tells us, 'I still had an hour allowed me to play, and then I would steal into some hole or other to read. My father would have me learn Latin, and I was so apt that I outstripped my brothers who were at school, although my father's chaplain, who was my tutor, was a pitiful dull fellow.' Music and dancing, so delightful to most young girls, only bored the youthful Puritan, while needlework she positively hated; neither did she care for the society of playmates of her own age. 'When I was forced to entertain such as came to visit me, I tired them with more grave instruction than

their mothers, and plucked all their dolls to pieces, and kept the children in such awe, that they were glad when I entertained myself with elder company, to whom I was very acceptable.' By way of antidote to this seeming self-complacency, she goes on to say: 'I was not at that time convinced of the vanity of conversation which was not scandalously wicked. I thought it no sin to learn or hear witty songs and amorous sonnets or poems, and twenty things of that kind, wherein I was so apt that I became the confidant in all the loves that were managed among my mother's young women, and there was none of them but had many lovers, and some particular friends loved above the rest.' By degrees, however, she weaned herself from all frivolous pursuits and amusements, and acquired a reputation for greater solidity of character and attainments than usually belongs to her sex.

It is now time to introduce her future husband. John Hutchinson was the son of Sir Thomas Hutchinson of Owthorpe, and of his wife Margaret, daughter of Sir John Biron of Newstead, and was consequently connected with the best and oldest families in Nottinghamshire. His father sat in the Long Parliament, and had previously suffered a brief imprisonment for opposing the royal will and pleasure when contrary to the true interests of the country. As a child John Hutchinson was weak and sickly, owing to his mother's premature confinement in consequence of a fright. His constitution strengthened, however, with his years, and after he attained to manhood he was capable of greater endurance of fatigue than most men. Of a peculiarly amiable and gentle disposition, he possessed moral courage of the highest order, and even as a youth steadfastly refused to take part in any practices or pastimes which seemed to him unworthy of a rational being. Inheriting something of his father's predilection for school divinity, his studies were of a grave and serious character, though his conversation was enlivened by a ready and cheerful wit, and was free from all taint of Puritanic cant and extravagance. At the age of fifteen he went up to Cambridge, where he took a good degree; and though the tutors and masters of his college professed Arminian principles, and the college itself was 'noted above all for popish superstitious practices,' he remained there for five years without the slightest contamination. 'For his exercise he practised tennis and played admirably well at it; for his diversion he chose music, and got a very good hand, which afterwards he improved to a great mastery on the viol; there were masters that taught to dance and vault, whom he practised with, being very agile and apt for all such becoming exercises.' The only weakness he displayed was in being 'enticed

to bow to their great idol, learning;' but, seeing that he was sent to Cambridge for that purpose, and, further, that his biographer was herself somewhat prone to that form of idolatry, it may be presumed that she did not think much the worse of him for this solitary hallucination. On his return home he found his welcome impaired by the presence of a step-mother, jealous for the welfare of her own children; and, being unwilling to create dissensions in the family, he shortly afterwards proceeded to London, and was entered of Lincoln's Inn. Legal studies having no particular attraction for him, he soon became wearisome, and John Hutchinson bethought him of following the example of young men of his own social standing in making a tour through France; but, being advised to wait till the autumn, he took lodgings in the mean while in the house of his music-master at Richmond, where the Court was then residing. He had been warned, indeed, that the air of Richmond was so far hurtful that it predisposed young people to fall into love, and a doleful example was related to him, but all in vain. No man, we are told, can escape his fate, and the future governor of Nottingham Castle was no exception to the rule. It so happened that amongst the music-masters, pupils, and boarders was the youngest daughter of Sir Allen Apsley, a mere child, with engaging manners, whom John Hutchinson frequently accompanied in her walks to a house in the immediate neighbourhood, belonging to her father, the keys of which had been left in her custody. Just then her mother and sister were absent from home, having gone into Wiltshire with a view to arrange a matrimonial alliance for the latter, which, however, came to nought. The child's cavalier was, in the mean time, agreeably surprised to find that Miss Apsley's little library comprised several books in Latin, and other works not usually found upon a young lady's shelves. In society, too, she was spoken of as, in modern phrase, a strong-minded young woman, of a calm temperament, and averse to all forms of frivolity. His curiosity was further stimulated by a sonnet that appeared to him to possess uncommon merit, and which was ascribed to her pen by local critics. Nor was he disappointed on making her personal acquaintance, and by degrees the respect and admiration inspired by her talents softened into more tender sentiments as circumstances threw them much into each other's society. His constancy, however, was subjected to a rude test, for on the very day of their betrothal the lady was attacked with small-pox, and for a time was so shockingly pitted, that at her wedding 'the priest and all that saw her were affrighted to look at her.' The marriage took place in St. Andrew's Church, Holborn, on July 3, 1638, and four months afterwards Mrs.

Hutchinson miscarried of twins. The ultimate disappearance of the pock-marks is, of course, duly recorded, and it is elsewhere stated that 'so constant was he in his love that when she ceased to be young and lovely he began to show most fondness.' A more faithful and affectionate consort he would not have met with had he searched the kingdom through, and she herself naively remarks, that 'certainly it was of the Lord (though he perceived it not), who had ordained him through so many various providences, to be yoked with her in whom he found so much satisfaction.' Nor was she less warmly attached to him through life, and after death she strove to redeem his memory from misrepresentation and oblivion by writing one of the most valuable memorials of those times, in which the whole truth is set down with admirable fidelity. Her description of the person and character of her deceased husband is doubtless tinged with excusable partiality, but it will be sufficient to reproduce the concluding sentence: 'To sum up all that can be said of his outward frame and disposition, we must truly conclude that it was a very handsome and well-furnished lodging prepared for the reception of that prince who in the administration of all excellent virtues reigned there a while till he was called back to the palace of the universal Emperor.'

In the year following their marriage the Hutchinsons removed to Blew House, Enfield Chase, where three sons were born to them, of whom only two grew up to manhood, the third being cut off when only six years of age—'a very hopeful child,' his mother sadly remarks, 'full of his father's vigour and spirit, but death soon nipped that blossom.' During the two years they remained in this place John Hutchinson devoted much of his time to the study of school divinity, and succeeded in converting the divine with whom he read to a right belief in that great point of predestination which had gone out of fashion in some quarters, 'but was generally embraced by all religious and holy persons in the land.' In this case fatalism did not produce its ordinary effect of indolent apathy, but rather nerved the much-tried couple to bear with patient resignation the grievous annoyances, mishaps, and troubles that beset the latter part of their united lot. This usually paralysing belief only made him more strict and circumspect in his conduct in order to testify his thankfulness to God for having chosen him out of 'the corrupted mass of lost mankind.' At a later period, chiefly through his wife's influence, he objected to the baptism of infants, and joined the powerful sect of Baptists. Mrs. Hutchinson was also very nearly the cause of his taking a step which might have sensibly *affected his career* in life. By her persuasion he had agreed to *purchase a place* connected with the Star Chamber, but, an acci-

dental delay having occurred, the Chamber was abolished before the time arrived when he would otherwise have entered upon office. The attached couple thereupon went down to Owthorpe, where they lived quietly and contentedly until the civil war broke out and demolished so many happy homes. From the commencement of the strained relations that gradually separated the king from his Parliament and people the Hutchinson family threw in their lot with the latter, John Hutchinson taking an especially active part in the popular demonstration that prevented the removal of the gunpowder of the county from Nottingham. Previous even to that stirring incident he had been reported to the Court as a malcontent, and all the more dangerous by reason of his moderation and calm decision of character. The king's party in Nottingham possessed a numerical majority, but their advantage in numbers was more than counterbalanced by the honesty, intelligence, and energy of such men as Ireton, Colonel Thornhagh, the brothers John and George Hutchinson, and Francis Pierrepont. 'All the devout people of the town,' we are assured, 'were very vigorous and ready to offer their lives and families, but there was not the half of the town that consisted of these; the ordinary civil sort of people coldly adhered to the better, but all the debauched and such as had lived upon the bishops' persecuting courts, and been the lacqueys of projectors and monopolisers, and the like, they were all bitterly malignant.' It is no part, however, of the object of this paper to describe the painful events that disturbed the usually peaceful lives of the inhabitants of the town and county of Nottingham. John Hutchinson at a very early period was appointed Governor of the Castle for the Parliament with the military rank of Colonel, and his gallant and tenacious defence of that important fortress is fully set forth in every history of those times. From his wife's more detailed memoir, however, it clearly appears that his most formidable opponents were to be found in his own garrison. On the slightest, as well as on the most serious, occasions he was persistently thwarted and obstructed by the open selfishness, the miserable jealousies, and vulgar prejudices of his subordinate officers. Nothing short of a stern sense of duty and thorough devotedness to what he believed to be the true interests of his country, could have availed to prevent him from throwing up his employment in disgust and retiring to the Continent until the storm blew over. It is true, he was fortunate in possessing a brave, high-minded, and energetic wife, who shared with him all his dangers and anxieties, and never failed to comfort and encourage him in hours of doubt and despondency. It is probable that Mrs. Hutchinson had benefited by the medical teachings imparted to *her mother* by Sir Walter Raleigh, for she

modestly mentions having some 'excellent balsams and plasters in her chest,' which proved of great service in the treatment of gunshot wounds. Noticing three prisoners who were bleeding profusely, she bound up and dressed their wounds, for which she was rudely rebuked by a minister named Palmer, with the military rank of Captain, who told her that 'his soul abhorred to see this favour to the enemies of God.' To which she replied, that 'she had done nothing but what she thought was her duty in humanity to them as fellow-creatures, not as enemies.' This same Captain Palmer was sorely scandalised by the Governor's leniency to his prisoners in inviting some of them to dine with him at his own table, and 'belloed loudly against him as a favourer of malignants and cavaliers.' The one black spot against Colonel Hutchinson's name is his signature to the warrant for the execution of Charles I. No doubt, he acted according to his conscience, nor is there any reason to believe that his wife disapproved of this fatal error. They were both consistent throughout, and never flinched from the certain consequences of their conduct. At one time, indeed, after the Restoration, when it was plain that Colonel Hutchinson must not expect common justice, notwithstanding the powerful interest exercised in his favour by cavaliers whom he had obliged and benefited in their hour of trouble, Mrs. Hutchinson strongly urged her husband to flee to the Continent; but to no purpose. His resolution was fixed rather to suffer martyrdom for what he more and more felt to be 'the good cause,' than to purchase life by flight or any apparent renunciation of principles. He was accordingly arrested in his own house at Owthorpe, the Duke of Buckingham basely endeavouring to prove his complicity in what was called the Northern Plot, though it is tolerably certain that he had kept scrupulously aloof from all political conspiracies of every kind after giving his assent to Monk's restoration of the monarchy. After patiently enduring much insult and annoyance the prisoner was sent up to London, accompanied by his wife and their two eldest children. Observing her sadness, for she knew better than he did what sort of men he would have to deal with, he bade her be of good cheer and show her thankfulness to God for His mercy in not dividing them one from another. On November 3, 1663, the travellers alighted at the 'Crown,' in Holborn, and on the following day Colonel Hutchinson was committed to the Tower on the charge of being engaged in treasonable practices. Not even then was he discouraged, but strove to comfort his afflicted wife by the assurance that there was still some great work in store for him. 'But alas!' as she pathetically exclaims, 'her divining heart was *not comforted*; she remembered what had been told her of the

cruel resolutions taken against him, and saw now the execution of them.' Some weeks, too, elapsed before she succeeded in obtaining permission to see him, and then only in presence of a keeper. Neither was it of good omen that the room assigned to him should be that in which, according to popular tradition, the young princes were murdered, and which was approached by the dark chamber where the Duke of Clarence was drowned in a butt of malmsey. In this gloomy cell Colonel Hutchinson was confined for close upon six months, without being once confronted with his accuser or even informed of the precise character of the accusation laid against him.

At length he was discharged from the Tower; but only to be removed to Sandown Castle, a fortress in ruins and reeking with damp. The garrison consisted of a company of foot from Dover, 'pitiful weak fellows, half-starved and eaten up with vermin, whom the Governor of Dover cheated of half their pay, and the other half they spent in drink.' The colonel boarded with the lieutenant in command for twenty shillings a week, exclusive of wine and various extras, and was allowed the company of his wife and children during the daytime. To enjoy this privilege, however, Mrs. Hutchinson had to trudge on foot to and from Deal, every day, 'with horrible toil and inconvenience,' but never failed in her duty. It is true, he needed neither solace nor encouragement, being sustained by the conviction that he was set apart to achieve the deliverance of the saints from their scorers and oppressors. His only reading was the Bible, of which he never wearied, his favourite portion, perhaps, being the Epistle to the Romans, which he annotated with great fulness. For amusement he 'sorted and shadowed,' with great skill and taste, the cockle-shells with which he was plentifully provided by his wife and children. At times, when her grief overpowered her, he would gently chide her and bid her trust in the cause, of which he was destined in God's own time to be an honoured instrument. And even were his life in danger, he believed that his death would advance the triumph of that cause by hastening God's vengeance upon his enemies. On one occasion, when she expressed some apprehension of his being sent off to Tangiers, he replied: 'God is the same at Tangiers as at Owthorpe; prithee, trust God with me; if He carry me away, He will bring me back again.' Indeed, his afflictions seemed to him a reason for rejoicing, inasmuch as they were a proof that he was counted among God's children. In the early autumn of 1664 Mrs. Hutchinson was compelled to return to Owthorpe to arrange their embarrassed affairs, when so confident did he appear of his early release that he gave her particular direc-

tions about planting trees, and entered into various other details. Very shortly after her departure, however, he was seized with a severe attack of ague; and, when the eminent physician who had been summoned from Canterbury was informed in what part of the castle his patient was confined, he immediately exclaimed, 'That chamber has killed him.' In eight days death terminated the sufferings of the meek but fanatical regicide, and his last message to his wife was in accordance with his own habitual resignation. 'Let her,' he said, 'as she is above other women, show herself on this occasion a good Christian, and above the pitch of ordinary women.' In obedience to this injunction his sorrowing widow restrained her idle tears, and devoted herself to the vindication of his memory by writing a singularly interesting memoir of his life. Little is known of her own declining years, beyond the fact of her abiding veneration of her departed husband, and of her sedulous discharge of her parental duties.

JAMES HUTTON.

The Poet's Reason.

I 'LIVE to write; and write,' good friend,
 In part, I know, for you;
 Though, while I do so, in the end
 Myself it pleases too.

'The world,' you think, 'may prize my rhymes!'
 The world—who knows its mood?
 It may; but long and long were times
 I only deemed them good.

I 'like to write'? You're near the truth:
 I like to talk as well;
 And poems speak a part, forsooth,
 Of what the soul would tell.

Ay, ay, the soul! With souls to meet:
 How meet that these should see—
 Not poems, but the poem sweet
 That all one's life would be!

G. L. RAYMOND.

Juliet.

BY MRS. H. LOVETT CAMERON.

CHAPTER XXXI.

WATTIE ELLISON DECLINES AN INVITATION.

FLORA TRAVERS sat on the box seat of the 99th drag at the Eton and Harrow match.

The sun beat down fiercely upon the bright scene—upon the crowds of carriages, the sea of faces, the dazzling masses of pale and dark blue, which encircled the smooth open green sward in the middle, where every eye was fixed eagerly upon a handful of slender boys in white flannel.

I know not a more characteristically English scene than this same great annual cricket-match. In no other nation of Europe could such an intense excitement be created by so small a cause.

Merely a game between a few schoolboys! Yet it is a thing of national interest. There is not a heart in all that vast assembly that does not beat with intense apprehension as to the final result of that two days' game, from the grey-haired statesman who remembers his own Eton days, and proudly watches his slight grandson fielding among the light blue Eleven, down to the fat-cheeked ten-year-old Harrow boy in the lowest form in the school, who sits among his schoolfellows, hallooing and shouting he hardly knows at what.

And the ladies, bless them, are as eager as the men! Have they not all of them brothers, cousins, sons, or grandsons, in one or other of the two great schools? And, if these are wanting, the lover possibly was a 'Harrow man,' or at all events they have a pair or so of gloves on the result, enough to give to one and all a feeling of enthusiastic partisanship.

No game is to the uninitiated so uninteresting to watch as cricket; yet all this great mixed multitude, three-fourths of whom hardly know swift from slow bowling, and have not the remotest idea what is meant by longstop or short slip, sit out here for hours and hours in the shadeless sunshine, watching every ball in breathless and almost in silent suspense, as if their very lives depended on it.

Flora Travers sits on the box seat of the 99th drag in her dark-blue bonnet and white muslin dress, with a plate of cold salmon on her lap, and a glass of champagne in her hand. Captain Hartley is on one side of her, and another gallant Lancer clinging on between earth and heaven, one foot on the wheel and one on

some step midway, stands on the other side of her helping her to salad. Flora looks and laughs from one to the other, utters her little sallies, dimples over with pretty little smiles, registers her little bets, and looks and is supremely happy.

Every thought of Wattie and his displeasure has gone out of her head. It is very delightful to be where she is; Captain Hartley is devoted to her; she is conscious of being well dressed in spite of the dark-blue bonnet; the sunshine is bright, the scene is all new to her, and she is seventeen! What more can she want? The young are very philosophical; the passing hour is of more value to them than the look-out of their whole lives.

And then in the very middle of it all, just as the day was nearly over—when in half an hour six o'clock would be struck on the big clock across the ground, and the wickets would be drawn—just as she was laughing her gayest and looking her brightest and happiest, down in the moving crowd below she catches sight of Wattie's face looking up at her, stern and displeased.

She half rose from her seat and made a little gesture to beckon him to her; but he only lifted his hat distantly and coldly, and passed on and was lost among the sea of black coats.

And all at once the sunshine and the brightness and all the freshness seemed to have gone out of everything, and nothing seemed pleasant or happy to her any longer.

When she reached home an hour later, Juliet met her at the door.

'Well, dear, have you had a pleasant day? have you enjoyed it?' she asked of her young sister-in-law. But Flora answered her dejectedly and wearily.

'Oh yes, I suppose so; it was very hot, and I am dreadfully tired;' and she passed languidly upstairs.

'It was a delightful day, Juliet!' cried Mrs. Dalmaine, who had come home with her. 'You poor dear, not to have gone at all! There was Lord George wandering about in misery, looking for you. He had to come and console himself with me. Such lots of people! and such a splendid lunch we had! And there is no doubt about it that Jack Hartley is quite struck by your Flora; you may take my word for it, that will be a match!'

With all Mrs. Dalmaine's flirting propensities, she always took a true woman's interest in the making up of a match.

A marriage, she was in the habit of saying, often spoilt a man, but generally made a woman; and any addition to the sacred sisterhood of 'frisky matrons' was hailed by her as a benefit to the community at large. She looked upon Flora as a very hopeful sort of *young woman*—'really, you know, not bad for a girl,' she would say—

and she would have been genuinely pleased to see her married to some one in her own set.

With all her faults, Rosa Dalmaine never grudged a younger and prettier woman her triumphs. She had suffered too much herself from the spiteful and envious tongues of other women to be anything but generous to a possible rival.

Mrs. Dalmaine had long ago forgiven Juliet for disappointing her about the water party to Maidenhead, but she had not forgotten her friend's promise of a dinner at Hurlingham to make up for it.

The day was now fixed for this dinner, and the invitations were sent out. Cis promised Juliet that he would go, and Captain Hartley was of course among those invited.

'Would you mind very much asking one more, Juliet?' Flora said to her sister-in-law with a trembling voice, coming up and standing nervously behind her chair.

'And whom do you want me to ask, Flora?'

'Wattie,' answered the girl, with a deep blush. Juliet turned round and looked up at her for a moment.

'If you think you can manage to keep all your lovers in order, my dear,' she said, laughing, 'I will ask him, by all means.'

'Oh, thank you, Juliet dear!' cried Flora with alacrity; and in her own mind she determined to show Wattie once for all how mistaken he was in being so jealous, by snubbing Captain Hartley and being everything that was gracious to himself. It should go hard with her, she thought, if she did not manage somehow to reinstate herself in his good graces during that evening.

The following morning the answer to Juliet's invitation lay on the breakfast-table. Flora, who was down first, recognised the handwriting of the note, but would not seem to notice it; she busied herself with teasing the kitten and putting lumps of sugar into the canary's cage, and would not even look round when Juliet came in and began opening her letters.

'Pretty dickey—pretty dick!' said Flora, standing in front of the cage stuffing her fingers through the bars, to the no small alarm of its fluttering and tweaking occupant. 'Pretty little dickey!' and all the time her heart was beating and thumping so that she could hardly breathe.

'I am so sorry Wattie can't come on Saturday, Flora!' broke in Juliet's voice from the breakfast table.

'Pretty dickey!' said Flora again, but this time in a fainter voice, and her heart seemed to stop altogether for an instant, and then she stood quite still, staring into the cage for a minute or two before she spoke.

'Oh, can't he? Well, I dare say we shall be very happy without him.' And then she sat down to the table and helped herself rather largely to curried eggs.

Juliet had thrown the note carelessly across the table to her, and presently she took it up and read it—merely a formal answer—he was very sorry to be unable to accept Mrs. Travers's kind invitation—that was all; he did not even plead another engagement!

'I suppose you don't want to keep it,' she said, and then solaced her angry feelings by tearing it up viciously into very small pieces.

When the morning of the dinner arrived, Cis said to his wife after breakfast—

'I am afraid I shan't be able to go with you to Hurlingham, Juliet.'

'Not go, Cis? Why, you promised me that you would, and I think it will be hardly civil to our guests if you do not,' said Juliet in some dismay.

'I am very sorry,' he answered, looking down and shuffling his feet nervously up and down the hearth-rug. 'Of course I meant to go—but the fact is, I have had a letter from home—my father is not very well—nothing to speak of, of course, but I think he wants to see me, and in short I think I had better run down to-day, and I know you can do very well without me.'

Juliet looked into her husband's face, and something in its weak irresolute lines told her that he was not speaking the truth to her.

'Oh, very well,' she answered coldly and contemptuously; 'please yourself, of course.'

Cis kissed her with some effusion, feeling rather thankful to be let off so easily, but Juliet shrank involuntarily from the conjugal salute.

'There, that will do; there is nothing to kiss me about; I suppose there is no occasion to say anything to Flora about your father's indisposition!' with a ring of scorn in the last words.

'Oh dear no, certainly not!' said Cis airily, and went his way into his study; and, having carefully shut the door, he drew out of his pocket and proceeded to read over a small note written in cramped foreign-looking characters.

'Will you come and see me to-morrow as early as you can?' ran this note. 'I have an idle morning and a great deal to talk to you about—in fact, I want your advice and counsel upon a most important matter—you never have anything to do, so I know you will come if you can; and perhaps you will take me out to Hampstead, where I am due at three o'clock to play at a charity

concert. I will make you benefit the charitable purposes of it by taking a ticket and listening to my performances.

‘Yours sincerely,
‘GRETCHEN.’

Half-an-hour later, Cis Travers had put himself into a hansom and was bowling along swiftly westwards towards Gretchen Rudenbach’s little suburban villa.

‘So Mr. Travers has thrown your dinner over!’ said Mrs. Dalmaine, as the two friends were driving down together that afternoon to Hurlingham in the victoria, Flora having gone on with some other members of their party.

‘Yes, he has gone down to Broadley,’ answered Juliet, putting a good face upon her husband’s defection; ‘his father was not very well, and he thought he ought to go. It is tiresome, of course, but —’

‘But, neither you nor I ever thought he meant to come!’ interrupted her friend with a laugh.

‘I don’t know why you should say so,’ said Juliet, a little nettled. ‘Cis had every intention of going last night; I assure you it was only this morning, when the letter came from his father, that he thought it right to go down.’

Mrs. Dalmaine threw back her pretty little blonde head, and burst out laughing.

‘My poor Juliet! and you don’t mean to say you believe that story? How wonderfully easily some wives are duped!’

‘What do you mean, Rosa? You do not, surely, think——’

‘I do most surely think that, having been up to lunch to-day with my old aunt, who lives at the back of the Zoological Gardens, as I came southwards in a hansom I encountered your husband coming up northwards, also in a hansom, with——’

‘Ah, for heaven’s sake don’t say it!’ cried poor Juliet, clutching hold of her arm; but Rosa Dalmaine was relentless.

‘Why do you get so upset about things, my dear? You had much better know who it was—it was that little German pianiste with the big innocent eyes, who played at your musical party.’

And then Juliet leant back in the carriage with a very white face, and did not speak another word during the rest of the drive.

It was not jealousy—she did not love her husband well enough to be jealous—it was the shame of it that she felt so acutely.

That he should stoop to deceive her, to invent paltry lies to mislead her, that he should put it into the power of others to twit her with his desertion and his double dealing, made him appear so utterly contemptible in her eyes, that every shadow of affection and respect that lingered in her heart towards him died away

out of it from that very minute. What duty, she asked herself bitterly, does a wife owe to a husband who has thus lost all claim to her respect? what meaning, what binding power is there in those old vows to 'love and to honour,' where it has become impossible to do either? Poor storm-tossed, well-nigh despairing woman! Only the temptation seemed now wanting to complete her most utter loss. And even that was not far off.

About an hour later on that same afternoon it so happened that Colonel Fleming was standing idly lighting his cigar on the steps outside his club, listening with half-attention to some old Indian reminiscences which Major-General Chutney was volubly pouring into his ear, when a phaeton and showy pair of high-stepping cobs pulled up at the door, and Hugh recognised with a nod his cousin, that lord of whom mention has before been made in these pages.

'My dear Hugh!' cried this august personage, 'delighted to see you! I came after another fellow, but you'll do much better—come, jump up here; I've got a few men to dinner at Hurlingham this evening—will you join us? Jump up, and I'll drive you down. The man who was going with me has lost his grandmother, or his uncle, or somebody, and just sent to say he can't go—and it is so dull, driving alone; and, by Jove, I'd rather have your company than any one else's; so jump up.'

'Thanks,' answered Hugh, with no great eagerness; 'you are very kind, but I don't think Hurlingham dinners are much in my line. I have been so long away, you know. It's very kind, all the same, of you——'

'Kind, be ——!' exclaimed his lordship, with good-tempered heartiness. 'Don't stand making speeches to me. What's the good of a cousin if he can't take a short notice and come and dine with one in a friendly way! I really want your company, man; so make no more fuss about it, but jump up, and don't keep these fidgeting brutes waiting any longer.'

'Oh, if you put it in that way, of course I shall be delighted,' said Hugh, and straightway mounted into the phaeton, and, nodding farewell to the little General, was driven off.

Major-General Chutney, who knew the great man well by sight, gazed after them with admiring awe.

'How pleased Mrs. Chutney will be to hear about it!' he reflected, rubbing his hands together; 'called him "Hugh," too, as chummy as possible, and off they drove like a couple of brothers! Mrs. Chutney will like to hear about it; she was so angry with her *sister* the other day for saying she didn't believe his cousin the lord *ever* noticed him. It will be quite a little triumph for Mrs.

Chutney, quite—she'll want to ask him to dinner at once, I believe.'

So it was that Fate brought these two, Juliet Travers and Hugh Fleming, together once more that day.

There is no pleasanter, sweeter spot in and about all our dusty, toiling capital than that cool, green, river-side Club, that has of late years taken so important a place in London's yearly gaieties. The afternoon sunshine comes slantingly down upon the somewhat weather-beaten façade of the old-fashioned house, that has no pretensions to architectural beauty, yet has a certain old-world dignity which gives it a quiet charm of its own. On the smooth green lawn before it are spread out numberless little tables with snowy cloths, where tea and strawberries are being rapidly consumed by the gay, chattering crowd, in many-coloured butterfly garments. Further on is a background of green—the shaded meadow, with glimpses of the white shining river beyond it through the gaps in the chestnut-trees; whilst the faint popping of the guns beyond the garden hardly detracts from the rurality of the scene.

English people have few out-door recreations; yet there is hardly a nation in Europe that values and appreciates so well the few it has.

By-and-by the crowd disperses, carriages drive off, and the gardens are deserted. Two parties remaining to dine are alone left in the big empty house and its grounds.

'There is another dinner-party in the next room,' whispered Flora to her sister-in-law, as they went into the house; 'I wonder who they are.'

'Only some men, I think; I hope they won't be very noisy,' answered Juliet carelessly.

The dinner was long and hot, and, as far as Juliet was concerned, interminably wearisome.

It struck her for the first time, too, that Flora was talking to Captain Hartley with an eagerness and an excitement that were hardly natural to her, and that Captain Hartley was drinking a good deal of champagne, and seemed to be drawing her on into a more marked and noticeable flirtation than she quite approved of. She began to feel sorry that he had been invited, and to hope that no harm would come of it.

Rosa Dalmaine, too, was full of life and vivacity, and kept the talk going with untiring energy; the other two ladies of the party also seemed full of enjoyment, and to be equally delighted with themselves and the men who sat on either side of them.

Only Juliet herself felt dull and spiritless and weary—her head ached, and talking was an effort to her. She longed to be alone, to think out the miserable story of her husband's duplicity, which

saddened and revolted her even more than his supposed infidelity could do.

She was very thankful when some one proposed leaving the hot dinner room and adjourning to the gardens. The long windows were thrown open, and in a few minutes the whole party had gladly dispersed itself out of doors.

Wrapping her shawl hastily round her, Juliet fled alone into the darkened summer night. The perfect silence and solitude, succeeding to the noisy clatter of the dinner-table, were a relief to her; the cool night-breezes fanned her heated brow; heavily scented lime-trees, and rich clusters of cream and crimson roses, filled the air with a thousand subtle perfumes, and seemed to calm and soothe the turmoil in her heart.

Presently she came to the river—it sped along swiftly, but silently—a wide white flood in the silver moonlight.

She walked slowly, her arms folded upon her bosom, her head bent downwards, her long silk draperies trailing heavily upon the gravel walk behind her.

And, all at once, just where a bright gleam of summer moonshine broke through an opening in the dark trees, some one stood in front of her, and called her by her name:

‘Juliet, is that you?’

She stood still, and looked up.

Hugh Fleming stood before her.

CHAPTER XXXII.

BY THE RIVER.

‘Yes, it is I,’ she answered. ‘How did you come here? I did not know you were here: were you dining in the next room to us?’

He drew her into the deep shade of the trees before he answered her.

‘Yes, I was dining with my cousin; he asked me this afternoon. I did not want to come, but he made such a point of it that I could not well refuse. Believe me, had I known that you were to be here, I would not have come.’

‘How many apologies, Hugh, for the misfortune of meeting me!’ she said, not reproachfully nor bitterly, but very, very sadly.

He did not answer.

They stood together, those two, in the utter silence of the night, alone, and yet apart; they were side by side, yet she did not even look at him; the dark trees threw their sheltering shadows about *them*, the wide river flowed on at their feet. Against its white, *hazy flood*, *Juliet’s* tall, dark figure stood out clear and distinct;

he could see every line of the delicate profile turned away from him, every fluttering lock of her soft hair, that the light breeze had ruffled upon her brow, and the slender white fingers, clasped listlessly together, that shone out like ivory against her dark dress.

‘Shall I go? would you like me to go?’ she asked, very gently, turning to him and holding out her hand.

He took the hand, but held it fast.

‘No, as we have met, let me say good-bye to you here. I must have seen you once again.’

‘Good-bye?’ she asked falteringly.

‘Yes, good-bye. I have made up my mind to go back to India as soon as I possibly can. Until then, I shall leave town and go into the country, to Paris perhaps; anywhere away from London and from you. It is better so, believe me.’

Back upon her memory there came that scene at Sotherne, long years ago, when once before he had told her he was going to leave her: the darkened room, the flickering fire-light—his words so nearly the same as those he was speaking now—the faint sickness at her heart, and then her own mad words of despair.

Are things perpetually thus repeated and reproduced in this world in an ever revolving circle? she wondered vaguely, with a dull, aching wonder that was hardly pain.

‘I am much stronger than I was,’ he continued, in an unmovedly calm voice. ‘My doctor tells me there is no reason why I should stay in England longer than I like. I cannot well sail before the end of October or the beginning of November; but, meanwhile, I have one or two invitations to Scotland, and an uncle in the south who would like to see me before I go back, and I can always spend a week or two in Paris with an old friend. I mean to leave town next week, and should have called to wish you good-bye in a day or two; but, as we have met, let us say our good-bye here; it will be better, don’t you think so?’

But Juliet stood still, with head low bowed upon her bosom, and did not answer.

‘You know very well how bitter it is to me to leave you,’ he went on after a few moments in a lower voice, and clasping the hand that he held tighter within his own. ‘But you know also that there is no other course left for me, after—after what has happened. As long as I am here, you can have no rest, no peace, my poor child—but when I am gone, and you are no longer in daily dread of coming across me, you will be able to take an interest once more in your ordinary duties and occupations—the memory of much that is now painful to you will become softened and dimmed by time and absence, and you will grow reconciled to that life which my *unfortunate presence* has for a while troubled.’

Then all at once the flood-gates of her heart were opened, and she burst into a wild and passionate cry :

‘My life ! what is my life ? What have I to live for ? What one single thing have I in this world to make me love it ? Hugh, my love, my darling—do not leave me, for pity’s sake, do not leave me again—I cannot live without you—take me with you—take me with you !’

Her arms were round his neck, her warm breath, her passionate words in his ear, her heaving bosom upon his heart. With a smothered cry, he clasped her there, tightly, despairingly, and showered down mad, hot kisses upon her sweet, quivering lips.

And then upon his heart she poured forth all the story of her wasted life, all the love she had given to him long ago, all the miserable despair that had driven her to marry Cis, all the honest struggles, the hard warfare that she had waged ever since with her own heart. All the story of her husband’s falseness and duplicity, his coldness to her, his contemptible weakness, his powerlessness to ensure even her regard and esteem—she told it all, the long pent-up misery of a lifetime, in broken sobbing words, clasped upon his heart ; and then came again the wail.

‘What have I left—what have I to live for, if you leave me ? Oh, Hugh ! take me with you, take me with you !’

In the moments of silence that succeeded her passionate words—words in which all pride, all shame, all self-consciousness, every lesser feeling was merged in the one great love that, through all its sinfulness, had yet something almost divine in its utter self-devotion, like the impress of a master’s chisel on the ruined temples of antiquity—in those few moments, when the beating of their own hearts seemed to sound in the ears of those two louder than the soft sighing of the wind in the branches above them, than the subdued slush of the river against its banks at their feet—in those moments God knows what reckless agony of despair was not in the heart of the woman, what fierce heat of soul-consuming temptation in that of the man.

And then he spoke, brokenly, tremblingly at first, but more steadily, more clearly, as he went on.

‘Dearest,’ and his hand tenderly strayed over the soft dark head that lay on his bosom, ‘I do not think I ever loved you so well as at this moment. Do you remember in the old days how once before you offered your sweet self to me, love ? and how I left you then because honour bade me ?—fatal error, that I have ever since regretted, and never more bitterly than at this moment ! Then it was myself that I considered ; I was afraid of *being thought to have taken an unfair advantage over you, t*

have sought your money, to have wooed you as the heiress, and not as the woman. If such scruples were strong enough to make me leave you then—leave you as, before God, I believed, to forget me shortly in a more suitable marriage with another—do you not think I have ten thousand times stronger reasons for leaving you now—now that it is not my honour, but yours, that is at stake? Can your dishonour, your disgrace, bring happiness to either of us? Darling, I love you too well to take you at your word!’

‘You despise me!’ she sobbed, moving uneasily in his arms.

‘Not so, love. Can a man, worthy of the name of man, ever do otherwise than honour the woman whose only sin is that of loving him too well? To me you must ever be the same—it is of the world’s slanders that I was speaking—you do not know how cruel and how blighting they can be, my child. You think you would not feel them; but, believe me, I should feel them for you. My Juliet, my darling! second, but dearest and strongest love of my life, that no other woman can ever displace from my heart whilst I live—by your own dear words you have placed yourself and your life in my hands. Well, then, I will dispose of it. I give it you back, as the most precious gift I can offer you! I tell you that, lonely and miserable as it is, it is still better and holier than the life you would spend with me—that there are duties still left for you, in the patient fulfilment of which you may still find—if not happiness, at least peace.’

He ceased speaking. Juliet’s cheek, wet with tears, was pressed against his arm in silence.

Across the river, the lights on the opposite bank gleamed out in the darkness, and flung long streaks of broken red flame across the water. A bird, awakened, perhaps, by the sound of their voices, twittered for a moment in the branches above them. A gust of distant laughter came up from the great white club-house behind them, so faint, so distant, that its merriment scarcely jarred upon them. All his life long, Hugh could see that scene before his eyes, and hear those sounds in his ears.

‘Hugh, I cannot—I cannot leave off loving you,’ she said, raising her heavy eyes, glistening with tears, to his.

‘God forbid that you should,’ he answered. ‘I do not think the impossible is ever expected of us in this world—to tell you to do that would be to tell you to work miracles. Why should you not love me, my poor child? You have nothing else to love! Away with those who would see a sin in love! Love is divine—intense, honest love, however mistaken, however unfortunate the circumstances of it may be, must for ever be ennobling to him who loves and to him who is loved. Love me, my child, as I shall love you;

but, darling, we may not meet—not again in this world, if we can help it. I will keep out of your way even if I ever come back from India again; and for the present, for many years probably, there will be half the earth between us; and I will write to you often. We may at least be friends, dear friends, since we must be nothing more.’

‘You will write!’ she said, in a brighter voice—‘that will comfort me; and I may write to you?’

‘Yes, indeed, I shall look for your letters—letters that, I trust, will not tell me of a thoroughly empty and wasted existence—that will not be filled from January to December with nothing but the doings of fashionable life; of the sayings of such women as Mrs. Dalmaine; of such men as Lord George Mannersley. Your heart is too noble, your mind is too refined, my Juliet, to waste on such companions as these. Go down to Sotherne again, whether your husband go with you or not; live on your own land and among your own people; and then see whether life has not left you much to occupy and to interest you. It grieves me to think that Sotherne has been so long neglected by your father’s daughter—dear Sotherne! Will it make you like to be there oftener, Juliet, if I tell you that I love the place, that when I am far away it will make me a little happier to think of you there than here? For my sake, if for nothing else, will you make it your home again?’

‘I will do everything you tell me,’ she answered humbly, looking up at him.

He was not looking at her; his eyes were turned away across the shadowy river, and a gleam of moonlight lit up his strong brave face, that was neither beautiful nor young; yet out of his deep-set thoughtful eyes there shone the steadfast light of the great true heart within him, giving it a beauty of the soul which is lacking in many a more regularly chiselled countenance.

At that moment Juliet felt she hardly could pity herself and her lot. It was so good, she felt, to be so loved and so cared for by such a man. It was something to have lived for, to have won such a heart as his! And if, indeed, as he told her, they must never meet again in this world, surely the memory of this night alone must console her for ever for the blank years that were to succeed it.

‘You are so good to me!’ she whispered.

He looked down at her with one of those quick tender smiles which seemed to come into his face like a flash of sunlight for Juliet alone.

But the sight of her white face of misery, of her dark upturned eyes, wet with unshed tears, and solemn in their unspeakable woe,



'THUS WAS THE TRAGEDY OF HER LIFE PLAYED OUT.'



seemed almost too much for him. The smile faded from his face, and his lip trembled.

'Say good-bye to me, my darling,' he whispered hurriedly. Once more their lips met in a kiss wherein there was no longer any joy nor any passion, but only the blank despair of an eternal farewell. 'God help you, my child,' he said; and turned from her suddenly, and left her standing there, a dark, silent, motionless figure, alone by the white swift river.

Not looking after him, she stood there listening—listening with every faculty within her—to the sound of his footsteps as they gradually died away upon the gravel path. Fainter and fainter they came to her ears, till at last a total silence succeeded to their irregular sound. It was the last of Hugh Fleming! So had he passed away from her for ever. Thus was the tragedy of her life played out!

With a long, shivering sigh, Juliet turned and walked a few steps in the opposite direction; then stopped again, feeling strangely weak and feeble, and, leaning against the trunk of a tree, looked out again across the river.

As she stood there, a boat dropped noiselessly down the stream, close in to the shore. A man was rowing, a boy stood up in the front of the boat, and in the stern was a woman muffled up in a shawl, crouched down with her head bent forward upon her knees, her face buried in her hands.

Afterwards Juliet recollected noticing this silent boat-load, and speculating with something like a keen interest upon what was the history of this little family, whose faces she could not see, and whose forms alone stood out in 'chiara oscura' against the white background of the water. Whence did they come? Whither were they bound? What sorrow had bowed down that poor woman into that attitude of dejected grief?

'God help her, whatever her trouble may be, poor soul!' murmured Juliet half aloud, as the boat passed out of sight round a bend of the river. And who knows whether that short prayer from the woman who knew her not, yet felt for her with that keen sense of human fellowship with suffering which sometimes, with a flash of God-like pity, seems to sweep away all distinction of class and caste, and to make us one with the beggar in the street—who can say that that prayer was not indeed heard and answered to that other sorrow-laden woman, who did not even see the dark pitying figure of her who prayed for her upon the river bank as she passed by!

In those first moments, Juliet hardly realised her own trouble. *She could not have shed a single tear.* If you had asked her the

most trivial question, she would have answered you in her usual voice, as if nothing had happened. A numb feelingless apathy was upon her; she could not even fix her thoughts upon what had passed. She wondered vaguely if she was heartless, if she had turned into stone, if she had lost all power of sorrowing!

'He is gone!' she kept on repeating to herself. 'I shall never see him in this world again; never hear his voice; never see him smile; never, never, as long as I live!' And yet the words seemed like so many meaningless empty sounds to her as she uttered them.

All at once the voices of her every-day life broke in upon her. Some of the gay party amongst whom she had sat at dinner-time—ah, how long ago it seemed now! and what a lifetime she had lived through since she had last seen their faces!—came laughing and chatting along the river-walk, talking about some of the hundred little topics of daily life, about the bets upon the last week's cricket-match, the plans for next week's gaieties, the prospects and arrangements for Goodwood. Juliet shrank closer under the shadow of the tree against which she leant, until the talkers had gone by. Everything was going on just as usual, the world was hurrying on gay and careless from one bright scene of enjoyment to another; and she herself—ah, God! how utterly alone in it she was!

With a sudden pang of suffering she roused herself, and walked hastily back to the house. She found Flora and Captain Hartley lingering together among the rose-beds.

'It is getting late, Flora; we had better go home. Do you think my carriage is here? Captain Hartley, will you kindly go and inquire for it?'

'Are you tired, Juliet?' asked Flora, in a sort of dreamy voice, as Jack Hartley hurried off.

'Yes, dear, very tired; I have a headache. Has any one of our party gone yet?'

'No, I think not; but all those other men have left who were dining in the next room.'

'Ah!' and she drew a long breath. Then he was gone!

'You are not half clad, Flora, in that thin muslin dress. Come, child, fetch your cloak, and let us go.'

CHAPTER XXXIII.

CAPTAIN HARTLEY RETIRES GRACEFULLY.

SOMEBODY tapped at Mrs. Travers's bedroom door at about eleven o'clock the following morning.

'May I come in, Juliet?' said Flora, half opening it. 'Is your headache better?'

Juliet lay on the sofa wrapped in a white dressing-gown; her dark hair fell in thick masses on the cushions behind her head, and her face was as white as marble. There were heavy circles round her lustreless eyes, which made them look as if they had been open all the night. Her appearance was sufficient to have attracted notice to her wan and miserable face, but Flora did not seem conscious of it. Something else was on the girl's mind.

'I have come to tell you something—a piece of news,' she said, standing a little behind her sister-in-law, so that her face was hidden from her.

'Well, what is it?' said Juliet listlessly.

'Juliet, Captain Hartley proposed to me last night, and I accepted him.'

And then Juliet sat bolt upright on the sofa and looked at her.

Flora hung her head; there was none of the exultant joy, none of the shy gladness of a girl who has won a longed-for lover, in her face,—only white cheeks, and heavy eyelids that were swollen with tears and sleeplessness.

'Accepted Jack Hartley, Flora!' cried Juliet. 'Why, you don't care for him any more than I do. What can have possessed you?'

'I have accepted him,' repeated Flora with a certain doggedness, and looking away from her sister-in-law out of the window.

And then Juliet got up and stood in front of the girl, and, taking both her hands in hers, forced her to look into her face.

'Flora, my dear,' she said gently, 'you have got yourself into a great scrape, for you know very well that you care for Wattie Ellison and for no one else.'

'You have no right to say that, Juliet,' she cried impatiently, her eyes filling with sudden tears; 'that is all at an end. I have promised to marry Jack, and I must abide by my word.'

'You shall do nothing of the sort,' cried Juliet passionately. All at once she seemed to see in herself almost a divine mission to save this young, ignorant girl from the consequences of her own folly. In the old days no one had put out a hand to save her from a loveless marriage, but it should not be her fault if Flora fell into the same fatal error that had shadowed her own life. Here was a duty and an occupation even such as Hugh had told her she would find in her life; something to do at once for another that should leave her no time for vain and selfish repinings over her own fate.

'Listen to me, Flora,' she said in a voice that was solemn from the earnestness of her meaning; 'never, if I can prevent it, shall you be guilty of the sin of marrying one man whilst your heart belongs to another.'

'*Sin, Juliet!*' faltered Flora.

'Yes, for sin it is, and nothing less. Do you not know, child, that a wedding-gown and a gold ring and a few spoken words have no possible power to change the heart? Girls seem to think that with their wedding-day everything is altered and swept away,—that their present life is ended, and a new self ushered in that will remember no more, nor feel nor think any longer the feelings or the thoughts of old. I tell you, Flora, it is not so. The man that you love to-day you will love after you are married to another, possibly all the more intensely because he is so hopelessly beyond your reach; the thoughts, the hopes, the longings that belong to Wattie Ellison to-day, will be his on the morrow of your wedding, though a triple wedding-ring and thrice-told vows were to bind you to Jack Hartley. If girls thought of this oftener, there would be fewer unhappy marriages in the world. Quarrel with your Wattie if you like, and die an old maid—you will be ten thousand times happier so than if you become that most wretched and miserable of God's creatures, a loveless wife.'

The earnestness of her words impressed the girl with a sort of terror—Flora was trembling in every limb. 'What shall I do?' she cried, clasping her hands together despairingly. 'You see, I have promised—how can I possibly get out of it now?'

'Did Captain Hartley say anything about calling here to-day?'

'Yes, he was to come about half-past twelve this morning to see me. I don't know how to meet him, I am so miserable!'

Juliet glanced at the clock.

'Very well, Flora, if you will do exactly as I tell you, and leave everything to me, I will see if I can get you out of this trouble.'

'How good you are!' cried Flora, and she flung her arms round Juliet's neck, and, amid floods of tears, confessed many things to her about her foolish infatuation for Jack Hartley's handsome face, which had made her behave so badly to Wattie—and how she loved Wattie with her whole heart and soul, but was afraid he was too angry and disgusted with her heartless flirting ever to forgive her or to care for her again.

'You are a very naughty silly girl,' said Juliet to her; 'but I am determined that you shall not be a wicked one as well. Now you must do exactly as I tell you. Go and put on your bonnet, and tell William to call you a cab. You are to go straight to Mrs. Dalmaine, and tell her I have sent you to lunch with her, and you can take her those dress patterns, and talk about that new dress I promised you, and stay there till I call for you this afternoon in the carriage. If she is going out, you can still sit quietly there till I come for you, but you must promise me not to come away from her house till I fetch you.'

'I will do anything you tell me, Juliet,' answered the girl meekly and gratefully.

So it came to pass that when Captain Hartley was ushered half an hour later into the cool flower-scented drawing-room in Grosvenor Street, he found sitting there, not his pretty grey-eyed, fair-headed *fiancée*, but her handsome sister-in-law, calm and self-possessed as usual outwardly, but inwardly awaiting the interview with no little trepidation.

Now, to say the truth, Jack Hartley had been all the morning in a very disturbed and uncomfortable frame of mind, and had been ever since a very early hour reflecting with some dismay and a very bad headache on his last night's after-dinner escapade.

To say that he had been drunk overnight would perhaps be rather overstating the fact—but he certainly had taken more champagne than was usual to him, and, as he grimly reflected, it had been beastly sweet stuff, and had flown to his head in an unaccountable manner.

He certainly admired and even liked Flora Travers very much indeed. He had sat next her at dinner, and had wandered about among the rose-beds in the darkened garden with her afterwards. The night air had been soft and balmy, the night odours had been sweet and soul-entrancing; there had been no listeners save the grasshoppers and the night moths with folded wings among the flower-beds, and no lookers-on save the silver stars and one jeweled frog upon the gravel path, staring at them with all his might and main.

Given all these fortuitous circumstances, and a young man and a maiden wandering about alone together in a shadowy garden, and given that the young man is of a sentimental and impressionable turn of mind, and has taken rather more than is good for him, and that the maiden is fair to look upon; that her slight, white-robed figure gleams out with graceful distinctness in the darkness, that her eyes shine upon him in the starlight with a softness which no gas-burners have ever imparted to them before; given all this, and you can have but one inevitable result—love-making. It may be only a little sham manufacture—a pretty make-believe on both sides; or it may be that, carried away by a temporary exaltation, the love assumes a more serious aspect, and is made in real sober earnest; but in some shape or other you may be very sure that love-making will go on.

Now, Jack Hartley had been so carried away into making much more serious love than he had any idea of.

When he drove down to that Hurlingham dinner he had no more intention of proposing to pretty Flora Travers than he had

of eloping with his grandmother. So that when he awoke the following morning, and realised that he had not only proposed to her, but had also been accepted, he was, to say the least of it, very much disturbed.

Not that he in any way objected to the little spoilt beauty. She was charming, a dear little girl, a prize any man might be proud of; but our friend Jack was not exactly in a position for marrying anything but an heiress with five thousand a year.

His own income was small, and his debts were alarmingly large, and had a way of increasing weekly and yearly with a fearful steadiness and regularity; and Jack knew very well that Flora was no heiress, and that with no money of hers could that long list of debts be paid off.

Nevertheless, Jack Hartley was a gentleman, and no idea of not keeping to his bargain entered for one moment into his head.

As he pulled on his boots, and rang the bell for his shaving water, he cursed himself for a fool to have been carried away by a pair of grey eyes and a soft little white hand, and all the witchery of a midsummer night, into doing so very mad a deed as he had been guilty of the evening before; but, all the same, he sent for a button-hole flower, and took very particular pains with his dress and general appearance, and started off with eager punctuality for his interview with the girl who had promised to become his wife.

‘I called to see Miss Travers,’ he said, when he had shaken hands with Juliet.

‘Yes, I know, Captain Hartley,’ she answered; ‘but Flora has gone out to lunch.’

‘Gone out!’ he repeated, in astonishment.

‘Yes, I have sent her out; and, if you will not mind, Captain Hartley, I want to have a little talk to you myself.’

‘Oh, certainly, Mrs. Travers;’ but, man-like, as soon as he scented opposition, he began to make up his mind to stick to Flora with all his might.

‘Do you know, Captain Hartley,’ began Juliet, rather nervously, fidgeting with the trimmings of her dress as she spoke, ‘I am afraid this is rather a foolish business altogether between you and Flora.’

‘How foolish?’ he asked, a little stiffly.

‘Well, I need not tell you that a marriage between you would be utterly out of the question. I do not think that, from all I have heard, you are in a position to support a wife at all; and Flora would have nothing but what her father might allow her—which

would not be much, were she to marry you—as I am sure he would most strongly object to it. And—forgive me if I appear impertinent—but it is said that you have extravagant habits, and are very much in debt—is it not so? Of course her father would expect you to relinquish the one and to clear yourself from the other—may I ask how you would propose doing so?’

Jack Hartley was silent. He sat forward on his chair, and twisted his hat about in his hands, and looked rather sulky.

‘Flora has been entrusted to my care,’ continued Juliet, ‘and I consider myself answerable to her parents for any imprudence she may be led into whilst staying with me; so you must forgive my speaking to you so openly upon this subject. Captain Hartley, excuse me for telling you that I don’t believe that you are prepared to alter your whole style of living for Flora’s sake, neither do I think that she is the sort of girl who would be happy as a poor man’s wife.’

‘How can I propose to a girl one evening and give her up the next morning?’ said Jack, surlily; ‘how can you expect me to do such a blackguard thing? At all events, let me plead my cause, such as it is, to her parents.’

‘That is precisely what I want to avoid; at present, no one knows anything about it but you two and myself—let us all three settle that it is a foolish and impossible idea, and there need be nothing more said about it.’

‘But Flora herself will not consent to give me up, Mrs. Travers; and if the dear little girl is willing to stick to me, by George, I will stick to her!’

‘Flora,’ answered Juliet, with a smile—for she had no intention of lowering her sister-in-law’s dignity, nor of wounding Captain Hartley’s feelings, by revealing to him that Flora was not in the least in love with him, and had only accepted him from pique with another man—‘Flora is, I am happy to say, too sensible to wish to carry on an engagement which she knows can never result in marriage, and which can only bring trouble to you both. I have had a long talk with her this morning, and she has decided to be guided by me entirely; and if you will consent to look upon your last night’s words to her as a piece of folly on both sides which had better be forgotten as soon as possible, she has commissioned me to tell you that she will do the same, as she is sure that it will be better for your happiness to forget her.’

‘You mean to say that she wants to break it off, then?’

‘Yes, I think she does; and fortunately you have not known each other long enough for it to be more than a transient pang to either of you. I shall send Flora home in a few days; and if you

do not meet her till next season, you will probably have quite got over any little awkwardness by that time, and be very thankful to me for having spared you the misery of a marriage on a very small and inadequate income.'

Jack Hartley began pacing up and down the room. It was really a wonderful piece of luck to have things so comfortably taken out of his hands, and to have the way to an honourable retreat so comfortably opened to him. Of course the idea of marriage with a penniless girl was madness—it couldn't be thought of; he ought to be too thankful to any one who saved him from the misery of a comfortless lodging, a badly dressed wife, possible babies, ill-cooked dinners, cheap cigars, and a maid-of-all-work. Even a passing thought of these things made him shudder with horror and disgust. Mrs. Travers was quite right; he was not sufficiently in love with Flora to be able even to contemplate with equanimity such an utter revolution in his life for her sake; he had better by all means resign her at once, and be satisfied that he had done all an honourable man could be expected to do to fulfil the rash engagement he had so foolishly entered into; he had been perfectly ready to fulfil his part of the contract, and if she and her relations had seen fit to draw back, why, he ought to thank his stars for getting off so easily, and be perfectly content.

Perfectly content, of course.

And yet there was a hankering at his heart for another sight of the grey eyes, and the small fair head, and the saucy red lips that somehow, now that they were to be taken away from him, seemed to become more precious in his sight than they had ever appeared before.

'I suppose I might not see her again—just to wish her good-bye?' he said, rather piteously, stopping in his uneasy walk about the room in front of Juliet's chair, whilst a vision of one more kiss from those sweet lips floated temptingly before his imagination.

'Certainly not,' answered Juliet; and she could not help laughing, for she pictured to herself at once how Flora would weep and deplore her wickedness, and probably confess the whole truth about Wattie in her self-reproaches, and so break down the whole course of her own strong line of argument. 'Certainly not; no possible good could come of it, and it would be only a very painful ordeal for her.'

'Well, I dare say you are right,' said Captain Hartley ruefully.

'Will you tell her I am sorry—I spoke rashly to her; I ought, of course, to have considered everything—and I wouldn't drag her down to a wretchedly poor marriage for the world. I shall always

be fond of her, and grateful to her for being willing to have me—but it is better not; and now I think I will go, Mrs. Travers.'

So, with a tremble of real emotion in his broken words such as he had hardly believed himself capable of feeling for little Flora Travers, Captain Hartley took his leave, walked somewhat unsteadily down Grosvenor Street, owing to an unusual dimness before his eyes, then turned into Bond Street, where he encountered a friend, into whose arm he linked his own, and by the time he had reached his club in Pall Mall had, under the influence of congenial society and a good cigar, completely recovered his equanimity and his usual good spirits.

Wattie Ellison was hard at work at his chambers in the Temple. No painting litter, no easels with half-finished pictures upon them were to be seen about his rooms now, as in the old days when he had aspired to be a Royal Academician, and had copied Gretchen Rudenbach's gentle face as a study for his 'Joan of Arc.' Somewhere or other up in a lumber-room, behind several dusty portmanteaus, and a pile of very much dustier law-papers, that same canvas was leaning with its face to the wall, just as it had been left on the morning of Georgie Travers's death—with the figure of Joan of Arc drawn in, and Gretchen Rudenbach's face, fairly finished, shining like the head of a saint out of the blank canvas, whilst a confused mass of black chalk scratches all round it served dimly to shadow forth the howling, raving multitude that were to have been seen struggling and fighting below her scaffold.

Long ago had Wattie Ellison done with such idle fancies of a short cut to fame and fortune. His table nowadays is covered with briefs, his clerk looks in every now and then to receive orders and directions, and his face looks very stern and aged since the days when he was poor Georgie's penniless lover, who rode his uncle's horses, and had much ado to keep himself in boots and breeches through the hunting season.

Presently the clerk comes in with a cup of coffee and a piece of dry toast on a tray, announcing it somewhat pompously as 'your lunch, sir.' Mr. Ellison answers, 'All right, put it down,' and goes on with his reading and taking notes till the coffee gets stone-cold, when he drinks it all off at a gulp, and munches the toast with his eyes still riveted upon the blue pages of the draft in his hand.

Little enough time has a rising young barrister, with a fast-spreading reputation for talent, for any such trivial occupation as luncheon!

Presently the clerk looks in again.

'If you please, sir,' he says with some hesitation, 'there is a lady wishes to speak to you.'

'Eh, what—a lady? Some begging governess, I suppose. I can't possibly see her, Adams.'

'So I told her, sir,' said Adams doubtfully; 'but she seemed to think you would be sure to speak to her—and she is a lady, sir, and none of your begging-women.'

'Very well, go and ask her her name.'

Presently Adams came back with Mrs. Travers's card between a very much ink-stained finger and thumb.

'Show her in at once.'

And Juliet enters.

'I am very sorry to disturb you, Wattie,' says Juliet, when she had shaken hands with him, and had taken the chair he hastened to offer her. 'I won't detain you one moment; I only want to ask you if you will go down to Broadley next Sunday.'

'Why, is Mr. Travers ill?' he asked quickly.

'Not at all, that I know of; but the old man is always, as you know, glad to see you; and, besides, Flora will be at home again,' added Juliet, looking down demurely at the threadbare carpet below her feet.

'I don't see what that has to do with me,' answered Wattie, with stern disapprobation of Flora and her movements in his voice.

'Don't you?' cried Juliet, looking up at him suddenly in her impetuous way; 'then I will tell you—I think it has everything to do with you. I am a very old friend of yours, Wattie, so I am going to take the liberty of telling you that you are just throwing your happiness away; and I can tell you that, if you won't take the trouble to put out your hand to take her, somebody else will save you the trouble.'

'If Flora prefers somebody else ——' began Wattie stiffly.

'She does nothing of the sort,' broke in Juliet angrily; 'and the proof is that she is going back home to Broadley again as free as when she came to me; and I can tell you,' she added, with a free translation of the events that had happened which was thoroughly feminine, 'that if she had chosen she might have gone home engaged to Captain Hartley, and that she is not ought to be a proof to you that, whatever little faults she may have, her heart, at all events, is in the right place.'

'Do you mean to say that Hartley proposed to her?' asked Wattie excitedly; for the idea of a rival is never pleasing to any man.

'Certainly I do; and somebody else will probably do the same

unless you look after her yourself. I have no patience with you, Wattie—letting a nice affectionate girl like Flora slip through your fingers, just because you don't choose to take the trouble to speak to her.'

'It is not that, I assure you, Mrs. Travers,' began Wattie eagerly, and flushing a little as he spoke. 'I never meant to force Flora's affections—and I have fancied lately that she did not care for me except as an old friend. She has been cold in her manner to me, and has done several things which she knew I did not wish her to do, and which I had expressly asked her not to do. For instance, there was the day at Lord's—could anything prove more plainly to a man that a girl did not care for him than that?'

'Oh, what fools you men are!' cried Juliet; 'why, her coldness to you and disregard of your wishes was just what showed how much she was thinking of you; and as to the cricket-match, why, she went in a dark-blue bonnet which made her look almost plain, just because you are a Harrow man!'

'So she did!' exclaimed Wattie, remembering the fact for the first time. 'I did not notice it then.'

'Why, you were blind! A more marked encouragement could not have been given to you. You men always seem to think a girl must throw herself into your arms before you can believe in her sincerity. Now, don't be a fool, my dear friend; go down to Broadley next Sunday, and see if I am right or not about her affection for you.'

Wattie Ellison promised somewhat shamefacedly that he would go down to Broadley, and Juliet shook hands with him and took her leave.

From the Temple Mrs. Travers drove to Mrs. Dalmaine's house, where Flora was waiting impatiently for her.

'Well, Flora, I have settled it all for you,' said Juliet, as the two drove off together. 'Captain Hartley has behaved very well, and acknowledged the wisdom of all I said to him. I have convinced him that an engagement with you would be the height of folly, as there would never be money enough for you to marry upon, and your father would never hear of it; so it's all at an end, and he has sent you a pretty message, and we are neither of us ever going to allude to the subject again; he is not at all angry with you, and thinks you are quite right—and I don't think he is very broken-hearted; so let us never speak of it again.'

'Oh, Juliet, how can I ever prove my gratitude to you?'

'Why, by doing exactly as I tell you. I am sorry to put an end to your visit, my dear, but I am going to send you home to-morrow.'

‘Not really?—oh Juliet!’

‘Yes, really, Flora. Believe me, after what has passed, it would be very awkward for you to meet Captain Hartley; besides, I have promised him that you shall go—it is only right and fair to him.’

Flora shed a few tears behind her veil. ‘I have been very foolish and wrong, I know, Juliet dear,’ she said; ‘but losing the rest of the season seems a dreadful punishment.’

‘Well, take your punishment patiently,’ said Juliet, laughing, ‘and then perhaps it will turn out better than you expect; and be thankful, you foolish child, that you are not punished much more severely than by missing a few balls and *fêtes*.’

But of that other interview with Wattie Ellison at the Temple, and of his proposed visit to Broadley on the following Sunday, Juliet, like a true tactician, said not a single word.

They were passing down Bond Street, and stopped for a moment at one of the large jewellers’ shops.

‘You needn’t get out, Flora; I am only just going to ask if my bracelet is mended,’ said Juliet, as she got out of the carriage.

She went into the shop. A gentleman stood with his back to her, leaning over the counter. It was her husband.

A shopman was holding up before him a very handsome diamond locket, for which he was apparently bargaining, whilst several others of the same kind lay spread out in their velvet cases on the counter.

‘I don’t think I can do better than have that one,’ said Cis.

‘Certainly, sir; it is quite the handsomest thing of the kind we have had for some time, and I am sure would give satisfaction. Where shall I send it for you, sir?’

‘To Miss Rudenbach—120 Victoria Villas, Notting Hill,’ answered Cis in a distinct voice, dictating the address to the man, who wrote it down.

‘I will call again,’ said Juliet, turning to the door, to the man who had come forward to her. ‘I find I have forgotten something. I will call to-morrow.’

And she got herself out of the shop and into her carriage with the sort of bruised, giddy sensation one has after one has had a severe fall or a severe blow.

‘Was the bracelet done?’ said Flora. ‘Why, how white you look, Juliet.’

‘Home!’ said Juliet to the footman, who was waiting for orders, and spoke not another word all the rest of the drive.

(To be continued.)

BELGRAVIA

APRIL 1877.

The World Well Lost.

BY E. LYNN LINTON.

CHAPTER X.

REHEARSING.

SITTING side by side at a small round table, as if pressing together in mutual protection against the spaciousness and magnificence of their unloved grandeur, Mrs. Brown de Paumelle and her daughter were spending one of those quiet half-hours of gossip and needlework, which were the only moments of happiness accorded to them in their gold-tormented lives. Sitting there together, talking of old times when they lived at Clapton, and before they had become 'swells,' as Jemima called the gentry; living back over the Wilsons and the Jobsons, and Miss Wilson's West-End bonnet and Mrs. Jobson's ruby satin gown; over the discourses of their favourite minister—they had been Baptists then, when they were only honest city tradesfolk, but had fallen from grace so far as to be Church people now, when they were friends with the aristocracy and the owners of fabulous millions—and how that one on the deceitfulness of riches came home to them more now when they thought of it than it did then when they heard it, and how that other on the security of the saints was more comforting then under good Mr. Shepherd's fervid ministration than they found it now with Mr. Oliphant's colder doctrines; asking each other's advice as to what shade of colour should go there, and which was the best kind of flower to put there—they forgot for the time the sorrows of their success, and were once more plain Mrs. Brown and her daughter Jemmy, who was no 'catch' for any man, and of whose sacrifice for paternal ambition or superior mendicacy there was no kind of possibility.

It had all come too suddenly. Old Brown had kept his affairs a close secret, even from his wife; and beyond the general assurance

that he was doing well, and that an extra fiver would not break him, gave her no clue as to how matters stood with him. He meant it as a pleasant surprise on the anniversary of their nineteenth wedding day, which was Jemima's eighteenth birthday, when he thought that he would gladden the hearts of the two women whom he loved with such affection as he had to give, but ruled despotically and admitted to no share in his confidence, by telling them that henceforth they were not plain city tradespeople as they had been, but real swells—a sight more real than half of those who had never been anything else. On that fatal morning—for it was a fatal morning to them, poor souls, if to him the dawn of his day of triumph—he fastened round the lean and puckered throat of his wife, who had never worn anything but the cheap gold chain which had been his 'engaged' present, a necklace of diamonds that must have cost some eight or ten thousand pounds; and to Jemima, who had indulged in no more magnificence than was comprised in a few strings of glass or stained wooden beads, one of pearls, scarcely less superb. He produced his papers entitling him to bear the name of de Paumelle added to their homely patronymic; and he showed them, emblazoned on a sheet of vellum, a coat-of-arms found for the occasion. And then he told them that they must leave Clapton that day week, and go down to Grantley Bourne, where he had bought a stunning estate, and built no end of a mansion, all furnished and ready for them to go into; and where they would foot it with the best in the county.

He told them of the families about, and expatiated on the people at Machells; on the future arrangements between whom and himself, accustomed as he was to foresee chances in business, he had speculated not a little. He had already got to know them slightly, and he knew enough to make that future with them a matter of some anxiety; but the intimacy which came afterwards was consequent on the arrival of the ladies, which also he had foreseen. He told them of their carriages and horses, their garden and their glass, and made it all rose-coloured and paradisiacal enough; and he meant it kindly, and to play the part of Providence nobly; but he crushed them all the same, and they never recovered from the shock.

From that time the old life which had suited them so well faded from them, and they were unable to reconcile themselves to the new. It was too grand, too large, too oppressive. They faded and dwindled as if under a blight, and clung together with painful tenacity as the sole friend each had. They 'took to' none of the great families with whom they were forced in contact, save Lady *Machell*, who made it her business to be taken to; for here the

father again, utilising that keen sense of comparative values got from twenty years of buying and selling and watching the markets and making investments, soon found out the lines of demarcation between the first and second sets—the upper and the lower; and, when Mrs. Brown and her daughter would willingly have foregathered with the latter and left the former out of sight, warned them off the premises, and would have none of them. Their intimacy with the Machells grew, they themselves scarcely knew how. Lady Machell's secret wishes running on all-fours with Mr. Brown de Paumelle's, smoothed away all difficulties like magic; and when they had got over the stumbling-block of my lady and your ladyship—at first declared to be insuperable—and had found out that a human soul, like any other soul, was behind the barrier of her title, they supplemented awe with affection, and leaned on her as their sheet anchor at such times as they were buffeted by strange influences, or assailed by unknown dangers.

As she was a woman of consummate tact and ability, she had felt her way through the labyrinth of ignorance, suspicion, fear, and doubt which made up those starved and scared little minds of theirs, with a skill that soon made her as entirely their master and possessor as was the husband and father himself. Between the two, the frightened, overweighted women had not an inch of private spiritual self-hood left. They were mere plastic lumps of clay to be manipulated at will by the hand of the artificer—machines to go as they were directed; and, when the moment came, victims to be led to the sacrifice without remonstrance or complaint. Utterly unable to resist, they bent their feeble necks to the yoke with pathetic humility, and were silent and sad and oppressed and uncomplaining; only clinging together like two lost things alone in a strange world, and forgetting their present gorgeous pains in the retrospect of their past modest pleasures, when they were left for a few moments to themselves, and suffered to drink once more of the sweet waters of freedom and mediocrity. They both knew that their days of home life together were numbered; and that these quiet moments too would soon be things of the past like Mrs. Jobson's gown and Mr. Shepherd's ministrations; but while they lasted they profited by them, and were contented and refreshed.

They were sitting now close side by side at the little round table which they had placed in the bay of the window, so as to isolate themselves as much as possible from the cold grandeur of the huge room where they never felt at home nor looked at ease. The table was just large enough to hold their work-boxes and materials;—generally snippets of various stuffs and colours, deftly arranged in their several paper wrappers. They were both neat to

barrenness, methodical to mechanism; and this small space, where they had to arrange themselves as carefully as so many bits of a puzzle, suited them exactly. It was not suggestive of waste as a larger table would have been.

They were busy over the new cretonne embroidery which gives striking results in effect at small outlay of trouble, and supplies inartistic fingers with designs already made and needing only to be arranged and finished off. It was work especially congenial to both; and they were almost as content as if they had been at Clapton. Their whole energies were devoted to settling their patterns; and for the moment their forty bedrooms and acres of glass, their carriages and horses and dinners and dresses, their supercilious men-servants who frightened them, and their fine ladies for maids who kept them at a distance and tyrannised over them, the coat-of-arms which had been found for them and was emblazoned everywhere, and the *de Paumelle* to which they could not get accustomed, and which made them feel as if in perpetual masquerade—all ceased to weigh on their minds, and they were once more Mrs. Brown and her daughter Jemmy, whose largest exercise of intellect went to the question of whether a rose should be put this side up or that—whose highest flight of happiness was in the completion of the bag or the cushion in hand—and whose widest stretch of extravagance was to use silk for the ground when cloth would have done as well.

‘La, Jemmy, that will look splendid!’ said Mrs. Brown with a smile of satisfaction at her daughter’s taste, as she patted down the square of black silk with the flowers laid on it for trial.

‘I think it will be pretty,’ said Jemima with an artist’s modesty, deprecating undue laudation. ‘I hope that my lady will like it.’

‘She’s sure to,’ said Mrs. Brown. ‘She’s a good creature, though she is my lady, and knows nice work as well as anybody.’

‘La, ma, doesn’t it seem strange, when we come to think of it, that you and me should be so thick with a real lady!’ said Jemima opening her eyes. ‘If you’ll believe me, it sometimes seems like a dream all through, and that we shall wake up and find ourselves back at Clapton just as we used to be.’

‘So it does, Jemmy,’ echoed Mrs. Brown; ‘but,’ with a sigh, ‘there’ll be no waking up at the old place for us, my dear! We’re in for it now, and will have to go through with it. There’s no chance of your pa losing his money. He knows too much for that; and so long as we are as rich as it seems we are, here we shall be; and,’ with another sigh, ‘there’s no more to be said.’

‘Well, I liked Clapton,’ said Jemima with something like a

quiver about her pale lips. 'I don't think I ever can cotton to this life, ma—only I'm not to say cotton; I forgot; my lady told me it was vulgar.'

'It don't much signify, my dear, between you and I,' said Mrs. Brown fondly. 'We're not fine folk when we are together, Jemmy, you and me; and a few slips here and there don't count.'

'Oh, ma, it is such a pleasure being with you alone!' said Jemima leaning over and kissing her mother. 'I'm never so happy as when I'm with you alone, all to our two selves, and none of the men and things about. I can't abear those men!'

'Yes, it's home-like then, my dear,' said Mrs. Brown with a fond hug. 'You see, your pa has made himself quite the swell—he's gone into it like life, as I may say; but you and me, we've been brought up differently, and it's harder for us. And we don't care for it by nature, as your pa does. If we did we should have taken to it better; but it's a little rough in the edges, as I may say, for us.'

'Very rough, ma!' sighed Jemima. 'If it was not for you I don't know where I should be!'

'You'll not have me always, my dear,' said Mrs. Brown, steadying her voice as well as she could, and turning away her face not to let it be seen that her eyes were full of tears. 'Your pa will find you a grand husband some of these days, you may be sure; and then you'll have to do without me, and I without you.'

'They might as well measure me for my coffin at once,' said poor little Jemima in a despairing voice. 'I never can live without you, ma! never! and not the best man that ever walked could be to me what you are.'

'I know, Jemmy, I know,' replied her mother, wiping her eyes; 'but you've got to do it, my dear.'

'Oh, ma, I'm sure that Captain Machell is thinking of me!' said Jemmy, on whom the truth long known to her mother was just beginning to dawn. 'It isn't from vanity—I'm sure it isn't—but there has been a deal lately to make me think so—little things mostly—but little things do as well as big ones sometimes; and then my lady is so kind to me! so wonderfully kind! She said to me only last time I saw her, "If you was my daughter, Jemima, we should get on so well together! I should never have a fault to find with you." And if that didn't mean the Captain, what did it?'

'Well, my dear, and if you was her daughter and the Captain's wife, would you be happy?' asked meek Mrs. Brown.

'Happy, ma! I'd never be able to look in his face, not if I was his wife a thousand years!' said Jemima shyly.

‘But if he asks you? and your pa wishes it?’ put in her mother earnestly.

‘Oh, ma! I never!’ was all the answer that the poor little girl could give.

‘It will have to be, my dear,’ said Mrs. Brown with increased earnestness. ‘I know that your pa wishes it, and my lady too, and of course the Captain’s own self. I don’t wonder at his loving you, my dear; any man would; but you’ll never be as happy as with your poor old ma; never; so don’t you think it, for all that it will be grand,’ wiping her eyes furtively.

‘And is it really coming, ma?’ asked Jemima, shrinking a little closer to her mother and hanging her head over her work.

‘Yes, dear, if I can see straight ahead,’ answered Mrs. Brown. ‘Captain Machell intends to ask your pa for the honour of your hand; and then he’ll speak to you yourself. And he’s a fine man, my dear.’

‘Too fine for me by half,’ said Jemima, but not with displeasure, rather with timidity and a kind of awestruck admiration. ‘I’m only up to his elbow, ma; and he looks at me in such a way sometimes that I daren’t open my lips before him, and feel as if I couldn’t say bo to a goose when he’s there.’

‘You must say bo to that goose, however!’ said Mrs. Brown; ‘else there will be a row, and so I tell you. Your pa has made up his mind, and so has my lady, and so has the Captain; and now it’s only you, my dear, as has to make up yours; and that’ll have to be done, if it breaks my heart—as it will!’ she added in a lower breath, falling suddenly into piteous weeping.

Whereupon Jemmy wept too for sympathy, and said she could not, and she would not; but all the while felt that if she were asked she must; and that there would be as much chance of her saying no as of a lamb turning against a wolf and getting the best of the day.

While they were kissing and comforting each other, they heard the hall-bell sound, and the noise of doors opening and shutting; and in due course the gentleman-in-waiting announced Lady Machell and Captain Machell in a stentorian voice, as he flung back the folding-doors noisily and introduced my lady and her son.

‘La, Jemmy, and your eyes are as red as red, and so’s mine!’ said Mrs. Brown in a whisper, as she got up and went timidly into the room to welcome her guests; while Jemima stole behind backs shyly, and did her best to screen her poor little white-and-red bedappled face from the keen eyes which saw all.

But Lady Machell was one of those women who never show that

they see what it is desired should be hidden; and Jemima was made to feel by that subtle tact which belongs emphatically to good breeding that she was quite undiscovered, and her red eyes and tear-stained face unnoticed.

'I have come, dear Mrs. de Paumelle,' said my lady graciously, 'to see if I can be of any use to you in arranging the question of seats and precedence. Perhaps I am a little better up in the relative standings of our county families than you are. You see, I have lived among them all my life, and I know how sensitive some of them are.'

'You are very kind. I do feel strange to it,' said Mrs. Brown. 'It is different where you have been used to it all your days, and where you have come into it, as I may say, late in life.'

'You will soon get accustomed to it all,' said Lady Machell kindly. 'Indeed, you have already. I think you have learnt your neighbours with wonderful quickness. For it is a difficult subject, and a tiresome one.'

'I do not know whatever we should have done without you, Lady Machell,' said Mrs. Brown effusively.

To which my lady answered in her best manner:

'I am so glad that I have been of any use to you, dear Mrs. de Paumelle. From the first I was interested in you and your gentle sweet-natured daughter; and I felt for your strangeness—coming into such a compact little society as ours. It has been such a pleasure to help you!'

'You are very good, I'm sure,' said the meek-spirited woman humbly. 'I was just saying so to my daughter as you came in.'

'Now let us get through this question,' said Lady Machell with a pleasant smile. 'Would you come into the inner room, dear Mrs. de Paumelle?—we can arrange it better there by ourselves than if we were here. My son will amuse your daughter for ten minutes while we get this weighty matter settled.'

On which she rose, and Mrs. Brown was forced to rise too, and follow her ladyship's lead as she swept into the inner room, leaving Jemima alone with the Captain, as a hen might leave her only chick under the wings of a hawk.

It wanted just a fortnight to the famous ball which was to be the springboard for more than one leap, and as yet Captain Machell had not essayed any of the tender follies which come like second nature to the man who has resolved to make a beloved woman his wife. The utmost that he had done in the way of love-making was to address Jemima in a certain familiar and masterful manner, as if she already belonged to him;—a manner which has great attraction for some women, chiefly of the self-abasing

kind, and to which they yield more readily than to gentler methods of suing. It was all to which he could bring himself; for Wilfrid was not a hypocrite, though he was preparing to marry a woman for whom he felt more repugnance than affection, because she had money and his family had not. Now however he felt that he must in decency utilise the opportunity made for him by his mother, so he sat down by the table near to Jemima, and leaning forward looked into the pale, frightened, freckled face that was bending over a paper full of what seemed to his masculine irreverence a mass of rags, and thought for a full minute what he should say. Making love was an art that had neither been difficult to him to learn nor hard to practise; but to-day not a trace of the old lessons remained in his memory; and had he been a schoolboy of seventeen, in the presence of his first queenly adorata of thirty, he could not have been more at a loss how to begin, or how to go on after he had begun.

What could he say? Those small light hazel eyes, badly cut and expressive of nothing so much as fear and suspicion, wavering beneath ill-defined eyebrows faintly shaded at the beginning and then wandering off to a few sentinel hairs set at intervals along the bony ridge; that pinched and meagre nose, with its narrow nostrils and tendency to redden; those thin flat lips, and weak, scanty, colourless hair; that undeveloped figure where there was not one graceful line, one beauty to charm the artistic sense—how could he get up even the appearance of enthusiasm, of tenderness, of poetic idealisation for such an unlovely creature, he thought with mingled reluctance and self-reproach; and yet—it had to be done, and he must feign what he did not feel.

As for Jemima herself, she could not have defined her state of mind, if she had been paid for it, as she told her mother afterwards. She was fluttered and flattered, frightened and excited all in one. She felt more than she saw, and was conscious rather than perceived; but surely it was not for nothing that Captain Machell leaned over the table like that, and looked into her face as if he liked to look there, thought the poor bewildered little soul to whom had not been granted the gift of discernment.

At last he spoke.

‘What are you doing there?’ he asked; and the commonplace question coming on the resolution to which he had been nerving himself, and the vague expectation that had been disquieting her, fell with a curious sense of incompleteness and mockery between them.

‘Work,’ said Jemima.

‘Yes, I see; but of what kind?’ he asked again.

It is called cretonne,' she answered.

'How is it done?'

'You cut out the flowers, and stitch them around with silk. And it comes very pretty when it's done,' she said, a little abashed at her unusual flow of words.

'Some other things too might come pretty when they were done,' said Wilfrid heroically.

'Yes, they do,' she replied simply; 'tattooing and crewel-work does.'

With difficulty he suppressed a groan; but he took refuge in handling the cuttings which he took for rags; pretending to arrange them in artistic order, but failing signally to make any intelligible pattern out of them.

'If you please, you'll ravel the edges,' said Jemima.

She had watched him for some time in dumb agony, and at last could bear it no longer. Proud of, if oppressed by, his supposed admiration for her, and terrified of him personally as she was, the good condition of her snippets was of supreme consequence to her; and when she saw him pull the roses out of shape, and damage the tails of the birds of Paradise and the wings of the butterflies, her soul sank within her; but her very despair gave her courage; and she remonstrated, quaking at her own boldness though true to the faith within her.

'I am afraid I am not very fit for your soft ways,' said Wilfrid, laying down the flowers.

'Gentlemen never can handle ladies' things,' said Jemima; and again Wilfrid suppressed a groan.

It was terribly uphill work, and the point never seemed to be brought nearer.

'But you would be patient? You would not scold me if I were clumsy and awkward, would you?' he asked, trying to throw a meaning into his voice.

'It hurts me to see good material spoilt,' said Jemima; 'but I was never a great hand at scolding,' she added with simplicity, as a consoling assurance that he was to take to heart.

'I am sure you are everything that is good,' said Wilfrid.

She hung her head. This was coming a little nearer—was more on a level with her understanding, than those indirect phrases which might mean anything or nothing, and of which she was not keen or subtle enough to make anything.

'I don't know about that,' she stammered.

'Perhaps I shall find out for myself some day,' he returned.

She made no reply; but nervously hitched her chair nearer to the table, and fingered her silks awkwardly.

'Do you think you will ever let me? Would you like it?' he continued, his heart sinking.

'La, Captain Machell, how ever can I tell?' poor Jemima replied after a time, trembling, blushing, out of breath and overpowered. 'Ma knows me best. Ask ma what I'm like.'

'I can see for myself; you are good and true and gentle,' he answered.

Tears were in her eyes—tears of pure terror. Was this the beginning of the end? What a pity it was that he admired her so much! what a dreadful thing that he should be so much in love with her! She knew perfectly well that, as she had said to her mother, she never could 'cotton to him'—she would never be anything but, as now, mortally afraid of him; yet the idea of refusing him, should he offer to marry her, was as far from her mind as that a slave should reject the favour of a king, should he deign to show it.

'I doubt you think over well of me,' she said in a low voice after a time.

'Yes? do I?' he answered.

'I'm only a plain little body,' she continued; 'and it would be a pity if ——' She stopped.

'If what?' he asked.

'If you thought more of me than I deserve,' said Jemima.

'Could I?'

She opened her eyes in frank astonishment.

'Why, of course you could,' she said; 'I ain't a saint!'

Wilfrid was silent. At that moment Muriel's image rose vividly before him. He seemed almost to hear her low sweet voice; to see her fair blush-rose face; to be conscious of that mingled tenderness and dignity, that girlish grace and womanly strength, which made up her charm. When the vision passed, and he saw this plain, awkward, self-abased little girl by his side, this humble offspring of mediocrity and the commonplace—born to be the wife of some honest 'Arry, confidential clerk at two hundred a year, and destined for the future Lady Machell, and mother of the proudest family in the county—his resolution failed him, and his courage sank.

'Not now,' he said to himself; 'I will wait for the evening.'

Surprised at his silence, she stole a look at him timidly. He had covered his face with his hand; but she could see the thick and heavy lips drawn close and hard together, with a look of pain about them that went to her poor soft heart. Had she repulsed him? and was he grieving? She had not meant to do it; she had *only meant* to be honest, and not to let him think her too good for fear

of after disappointment. She had not intended to give him pain. But she was far too bashful, too much afraid of him, to say all this. She only waited in trepidation, wondering what would come next, and wishing that her mother and Lady Machell would come in to break up an interview which was so full of pain and perplexity, of danger and darkness.

He took his hand from his face.

'Will you dance the first dance with me at your birthday ball?' he said suddenly; and Jemima gasped.

'Oh!' she cried, the same odd sense of incompleteness, relief, and disappointment falling again between them.

'You are not already engaged?' he asked with something like a frown.

Though he did not love her, and shrank from his marriage as a sacrifice which nothing but absolute necessity could have induced him to make, and nothing but the nineteenth-century religion of money-worship could have sustained him in making, yet he looked on her already as his property; and the Machells were a race which did not permit poaching.

'No,' she answered timidly.

'Good; will you consider yourself, then, engaged to me?'

'If you like. But I am only a poor hand at dancing,' said Jemima.

'I can make you go. Trust yourself to me, and you will do quite well,' he answered.

'Thank you,' said Jemima humbly, and looked at him with a kind of fear and admiration of his inches which made him feel almost ashamed of his height and breadth and strength all through.

She seemed such a poor little victim by his side! Sorry as he was for himself, he was sorry too for her, and spoke to her with strange softness when he spoke again; feeling for the moment ashamed of the part that he was playing, and almost hoping that for her sake something would happen to prevent the sacrifice from being completed. He would have been very angry if anything had; but for the moment his better feeling was true, and he hoped—but did not intend—that she should be saved.

His softer manner however frightened Jemima almost more than his lordly ways of having and holding at his own will. While she was taken as by an irrepressible power, she yielded to the force of fate represented by Wilfrid Machell, as she would have yielded to it under any other form; but when it came to softness of speech and tenderness of demeanour, to the courtesy of deference and the appearance of allowing her soul to be her own—

on loan—then she felt partly as if on the edge of a snare, and partly was overpowered by a certain awestruck shame that one so much her superior should lower himself to her small stature—that one who was to her as a sovereign to a slave, should make believe to be her equal. On the whole though it gratified her if it frightened her. She was so sure now that Captain Machell was desperately in love with her! For all her narrowness and ingrained suspicion, the idea of being courted for her money had not crossed her mind; perhaps because in the midst of her perplexity and distress, her abject fear and submission, such sentiment as she had to give had been given to Wilfrid; and women do not distrust the man whom they love. Pride in her conquest ran side by side with terror of her conqueror; but she would rather have the conqueror than the conquest.

Soon after this Lady Machell and Mrs. Brown came back to the ill-assorted pair by the table; and this first faint essay at making love where none existed, this first awkward rehearsal of the pitiful drama to come, was brought to an end, much to the relief of all concerned.

My lady was the only one who was satisfied. For though she dared not question her son, neither was she told anything by his heavy and forbidding face; yet Jemima's was expressive enough, and, by what in her secret heart she characterised as underbred confusion, convinced her that something had been said, and that the game was advanced by so much.

The only thing that Wilfrid said to show how matters were with him was, when, looking straight before him as they were driving home, he suddenly exclaimed:

‘Mother, do not ask me to go there again until that evening comes. I cannot face it again.’

‘Certainly not, my dear,’ his mother answered kindly. ‘You know that your wishes are always sacred to me.’

After this nothing more was said, and they drove home in unbroken silence on both sides; and partly for satisfaction at the position of affairs with Wilfrid, and partly because she loved him, and could not believe him guilty of the class immorality of loving unwisely, Arthur's delinquency in walking with the Smiths—engaging Muriel for his own part, and allowing Hilda to be taken by Derwent—escaped rebuke, and the harmony of the household received no check anywhere.

CHAPTER XI.

'TIME WILL SHOW.'

WHILE this scene was going on at Paumelle House, Derwent and Muriel were walking back to Owlett, discussing the tone and manner of Lady Machell and Wilfrid with the pained yet indignant surprise of young people to whom snubs and slights are rare manifestations of Christian charity and polite breeding, and who know of nothing in themselves which should call them forth.

'What did it all mean?' asked Derwent, who, in his quality of man, was less clear-sighted than his sister as to the true aim of small social shafts and personal annoyances.

'I think that Lady Machell was vexed with you for asking Hilda to dance,' said Muriel not very profoundly; that part of the subject being plain enough to the typical meanest understanding.

'That was easy to see,' said Derwent with a superior air; 'but why should she have been? We may not be so old a family as the Machells, but we are in every way as good. By all accounts they have had odd people enough amongst them, while who is there to breathe a word against us?'

'Ah, but you see, dear, we are more obscure than they are,' said Muriel. 'We do not know all our relations, nor what bad things they may have done; but in a family like the Machells, everything is made public.'

'You cannot argue from a negative,' said Derwent; 'nor suppose things for which you have no kind of proof. We have nothing known against us, therefore we stand in the position of nothing to be known; while they have all manner of damaging pages in their family history. Therefore I cannot see why Lady Machell should be so much annoyed because I asked Hilda to dance the first dance with me. She knows nothing of what I feel, and the action by itself was simple enough.'

'Perhaps she is afraid,' said Muriel. 'She is said to be looking for a good match for Hilda, and it is just possible that she thinks our boy may prevent it, you know, if he is too much with her,' smiling.

Derwent smiled too.

'Perhaps she is right,' he said, the very simplicity and boyishness of his self-confidence robbing it of what would have been its offensiveness in a man. 'I feel sure that I could make her love me, Muriel; if indeed she does not do so already.'

'She is a dear little thing,' said Muriel; 'and so lovely! I thought she looked perfectly exquisite to-day; did not you?'

'I? she is more lovely than saint or angel to me,' he cried en-

thusiastically. 'I feel when with her as if in the presence of something beyond humanity. She is like a revelation when I see her, like a poem. She seems to transform the whole world, and to make everything beautiful.'

Muriel looked at her brother. There was no jealousy in her face, only an expression of faint fear—of sympathy which congratulated less than it dreaded.

'Ah, but, Derwent, they will never consent!' she said, repeating her first doubt. 'They want money so much, and Lady Machell has a will of iron, as we all know, kind and good as she is in some things.'

'I will get money,' said Derwent. 'I will get both money and fame, and make myself worthy of her. Of her, no—no man could be that; but at least of her birth, and acceptable to her family.'

'You are worthy of any woman in the world, dear,' said Muriel tenderly. 'It is not for yourself, it is only the money where the difficulty will be; and perhaps our being simple Smiths, and holding no special position,' she added with her fine perception of the truth of things.

'Both money and position are to be won, my little sister,' he answered; 'and,' flinging up his head, 'I will win both.'

'You will, if anyone can; but these things do not come in a day; and will she wait for you? It seems so ungracious in me to put all these difficulties first,' she said with a sudden burst of loving contrition, which however did not affect her judgment; 'but I cannot feel sure, Derwent, boy, that this love of yours will be smooth; there seem to be so many obstacles, and I am so afraid of your suffering!'

'*Amor vincit omnia*; and what has been can be again, and shall be,' he answered. 'But you are quite right, my Mentoria, to put the seamy side outermost,' he added, smiling with the look of one who can afford to smile at danger. 'It only shows more distinctly what I have to do, and what I will do.'

'You will do all that you determine on; I am sure of that!' cried Muriel, her own enthusiasm catching fire by his; 'and when you have made your name and got a large fortune, how proud and happy Lady Machell will be to recognise you! She will not slight you then!'

'And how proud and happy I shall be to lay all—all at her feet!' cried Derwent. 'If I had the crown of the world it would be precious to me only to place on her head! No man ever loved as I do, Muriel!' he continued, boy-like accepting the fulness of his own sensations as the measure of the world's emptiness; 'no man could! And it is not a selfish love. Everyone is dearer to

me than before—you, my mother, everyone! She makes me feel strong and great, as if I could not do what was mean or unworthy out of reverence for her, even if I had no self-respect and no regard for what is right for right's sake. There is no poverty in a love like this; and no cause for anyone, not even for you, my little sister, who have always been so dear to me, to be jealous. You feel that, do you not?’

‘Yes, I could not be jealous of what gave you happiness,’ said Muriel, checking a sigh.

It was but natural that she should feel just a shade of pain at this intensity of love given to another by the brother who hitherto had been everything to her, and she everything to him. But Muriel was just and generous too; not selfish on the one hand, nor a moral coward on the other; and perhaps the secret knowledge that she had another Derwent in Arthur helped her to bear this outpour with resignation, and to accept as natural the fact that Derwent had dispossessed her from the highest place, which had hitherto been hers, to set Arthur's sister there in her stead.

‘But I am sorry that Lady Machell was so cold and odd to-day,’ continued Derwent; ‘it makes everything so much more difficult. I intend to dance with Hilda at the de Paumelle ball at any cost; but I wish that she had not been so evidently annoyed! I am afraid the poor little darling will suffer for it at home. And when I think that, Muriel, it makes me almost mad!’

‘I do not believe that she is ever unkind to Hilda,’ said Muriel. ‘She is strict, but not harsh—at least, I think not.’

‘She has not a very good temper all the same,’ persisted Derwent. ‘Wilfrid is notoriously cranky, and so I fancy is she, much as I like and admire her. Sir Gilbert, Arthur, and my little angel are all amiable—but Lady Machell and Wilfrid!’ He raised his shoulders and his eyebrows, and the pantomime was sufficiently expressive.

‘Yes, these three are very amiable,’ said Muriel, with a sudden light on her face. ‘I scarcely ever remember seeing Arthur in a bad humour when he was a boy; do you?’

‘No,’ Derwent answered with friendly indifference. ‘He was always a good fellow; a thousand times pleasanter than Wilfrid!’

‘Yes, he was,’ she said; but Derwent was not in the least instructed by her radiant face and blither manner. He was so far from suspecting the truth, that no mere glimpse like this could give him its real outline. Besides, he would have been very angry and hurt and jealous had he known that Muriel was in love with Arthur. That he himself should love Hilda more than Muriel was natural and befitting; but that his sister should dispossess him

in his turn for another would have been an injury, and her happiness would have been his sorrow. It is a state of mind common to those who have been spoiled by over-much love. They grow at last into looking on adoration as their right, and to think their part is done when they accept love graciously—to return it generously not coming into the programme.

‘If my father had been at home, no such annoyance as this to-day could have happened,’ said Derwent suddenly; after a long silence going back to the beginning of things. ‘I felt at the moment that Lady Machell took advantage of my being so young and without a father to stand by me. It was ungenerous, but it was so.’

‘She did not mean anything personal to you, I am sure,’ returned Muriel. ‘She was horribly cross, indeed rude, but it was rather to keep Hilda out of danger than to be unkind to you.’

‘It is too late now!’ said Derwent with a glow of triumph. ‘I love her and she loves me—I am sure that she does! Did you see her sweet face, Muriel, when I wished her good-bye? It was like an angel’s—like a seraph’s—with that exquisite touch of sorrow on it which is the most divine thing in the whole world. A beautiful woman with those mournful eyes—that enchanting little sad smile which Hilda has sometimes—nothing is so lovely, so touching! It would take the heart out of her worst enemy, if indeed she could have an enemy! She is an angel, and more than an angel! Those lovely eyes! It was almost more than I could bear to see them when she looked into my face as I shook hands with her. Muriel! how I love her! It is sometimes absolutely pain—as if I should suffocate under it!’

‘Poor Derwent!’ said Muriel softly.

‘No, not poor at all—nor to be pitied, dear! Rich, divinely rich,’ he cried in a tone of exaltation; ‘rich in the greatest treasures of life—Love and Honour!’

He said this just as they passed through the lodge gates of Owlett, and Muriel, slipping her hand into his, answered warmly:

‘Yes, you are rich, Derwent—we all are! Our beautiful old house, what a lovely place it is!’ she went on to say, after a short pause. ‘I always feel so happy when I come into the garden, and we are once more at home. I do not think there can be a lovelier place in England than Owlett!’

‘Yes, it is a dear old place,’ he answered; ‘but,’ drawing a deep breath, ‘I sometimes feel it is nothing but a picturesque open-air prison, after all. I long to go out into the world, and to have something to do. This is not the life for a young man, and I feel it at times bitterly. Even with all that I have to leave, I should

like to leave—not for ever of course ; nor for long ; but for a time, and until I had done something.’

‘Yes, I can understand that in you,’ she said. ‘Boys are so different from girls. You want to roam about the world, and we like to stop at home. It is only natural, and will have to be some day.’

‘When my father comes home to take care of you and my mother, certainly ! I should not like to go and leave you alone, you two. But my mother has always said that I should go into the world, and so has uncle Louis, when my father comes back. And that looks as if they expected him before very long, for I am twenty-one now ; and even that is old to begin life !’

‘It would be dreadful for mamma and me, to be alone without you or papa,’ said Muriel. ‘But if it is for your good I think you ought to go when you yourself feel that you ought.’

‘How like you, Muriel !’ her brother said affectionately. ‘You are so good—the most unselfish girl breathing !’

‘Am I ?’ she smiled. ‘If you love me, that is all I care for.’

‘All ?’ said Derwent, thinking of his mother.

‘Well ! I do not wish to be disliked by anyone,’ said Muriel, laughing and blushing, but speaking with less directness and more evasively than was her wont.

And yet, had she been asked, she could scarcely have been able to say why she blushed and felt embarrassed, and did not answer Derwent more directly and to the point, because mentally she included Arthur Machell among those whom she wished always to like her.

The Tower pony carriage stood at the door as they went up, and told them that the Misses Forbes, one or both, were paying their trimestral visit to Mrs. Smith. For Miss Dinah, who was as remarkable for her method and the queer regularity with which she mapped out her life as for other things, made her rounds in the neighbourhood with unfailing punctuality ; and save for absolute impossibility, through weather or affairs, called on each person so many times a month or a quarter, and exactly at such and such intervals. To-day was her Owlett day ; which the children had forgotten, else they would not have gone out. They knew that their mother preferred them to be with her when she received visitors, and, loving her as they did, her wish was their law and her desire ruled their liking.

‘My pair of cherries on one stalk ! two roses on one stem !’ cried Dinah, as the brother and sister came into the room bright and smiling, the very perfection of happy English youth, well dressed, well mannered, both so handsome and the one so fearless,

if the other was only without suspicion, pain, or doubt. 'It does one good to see you both—and together. There is less danger in being together than with some others that I could name. Eh, Dimples?' with a sly wink to Muriel—had she been a man it would have been a nudge.

'I do not quite understand you, Miss Forbes,' said Muriel with that certain soft dignity which was one of her greatest charms. But neither her soft dignity, nor Mrs. Smith's statuesque coldness, nor yet Derwent's more fiery pride and openly expressed displeasure, ever had the smallest effect on Miss Dinah Forbes. What she wanted to say she said; and if it were in her mind to rally people, as she called it, she rallied them, and did not trouble herself about the effect which she might or might not produce.

'Ah! that is all very well, Miss Slyboots—all very well indeed!' she answered; 'but I am too old a stager to be put off with chaff, or caught by it—and have had too much to do in looking after Baby here, to be easily hoodwinked. Don't understand me, indeed!'—she shouted out her usual roulade of laughter; 'that you do as well as I understand myself!—only you think it pretty behaved not to say so. And perhaps you are right. Young ladies should not be too knowing.'

'You are fond of riddles, Miss Forbes, I see,' said Derwent sarcastically.

'Yes, so I am,' she answered, choosing to take him literally. 'Do you know any good ones?'

'None but what you yourself have put,' he answered indignantly.

'What riddles did I set? I don't remember. Baby! have you been giving conundrums to Mr. Derwent Smith?' she called out in her strong voice.

'No, indeed!' said Miss Aurora with girlish gaiety. 'I want to hear some new ones for myself. Have you any, Mr. Smith? Oh, do tell them to me. I adore riddles!'

The young thing was far too simple to read between the lines when hieroglyphics were going on—too transparent herself to suspect underplay in others. That was the impression which she wished to make, as she shook her curls and held her fan before her face, and looked over the top at Derwent, as if setting riddles was a pastime with a delightful little dash of naughtiness in it, just enough to make it nice and endurable—from behind a fan.

'Do you think the guessing of riddles worth the trouble and time that it takes?' asked Mrs. Smith quietly, refilling her shuttle with the fine thread with which she tatted monotonous little cobwebs of rosettes and stars that grew by slow degrees into dainty

antimaccassars worth 'good money' had they been paid for at the lowest rate at which human handiwork is paid.

'Worth the time and trouble that it takes? Yes! It is a very good exercise of the mind—makes people bright and quick; and I am sure some of the papers which give them expect you to be as learned as a professor. Oh yes, quite worth!' was Miss Dinah's reply.

'Yes? For my own part, I have always held it an unprofitable labour. But tastes differ,' said Mrs. Smith.

'That they do!' said Miss Dinah laughing noisily. 'You like that fidgety little needlework, which would send me crazy in a month; and I like my farm for occupation, and patience, and guessing riddles for amusement. And, upon my soul, I think that I have the best of it!'

'It is wise to be content,' said Mrs. Smith coldly, revolted by Miss Dinah's vigorous expletive.

'After all, the most important riddles are those of character,' said Miss Dinah with a philosophising air.

'Just so,' returned Mrs. Smith.

'Yes, character is the most important as well as the most interesting riddle of all,' repeated Miss Forbes, fixing her small eyes on her hostess with that keen look of hers which never faltered before innocence or anger, defiance or impenetrability, and which seemed as if it could pierce every outer husk whatsoever, and look right down to the soul within.

Mrs. Smith did not answer. She had assented once; that was enough for a woman of her reticence and paucity of words.

'For myself, I like studying character,' continued Miss Dinah. 'I like to make out what is real and what is artificial in a person—what is natural and what put on for a purpose.'

'Yes?' said Mrs. Smith; her favourite method of reply. 'And you think that as a rule you are successful?'

Her thin lips lifted themselves into the faintest trace of a sneer, and her nostrils manifestly dilated.

'Generally,' said Miss Dinah emphatically. 'I have a kind of dog's nose for all sorts of affectation, and know to a hair what is real and what is put on, as I say, for a purpose.'

'You are fortunate—rather, well endowed and gifted,' Mrs. Smith replied, her upper lip again slightly lifted. 'That is a discovery which few of us can boast of making.'

'I can,' she repeated with emphasis; and then there was a pause to point her assertion with more unmistakeable distinctness.

After a few moments she went on with the subject in a different tone;—that odd mouthing manner of a person talking on

abstract matters—philosophy for instance, or metaphysics, or the elemental roots of morality not as yet flowering into personal virtues or civic law.

‘There is another riddle connected with character,’ she said; ‘the possible reformation of an evil doer, and the right or wrong of recognising and receiving back into society a penitent criminal. A difficult matter that!—a very difficult matter indeed!’

Mrs. Smith went on filling her shuttle.

‘It is always a problem,’ she said.

‘And how much you may forgive—what crimes are comparatively venial, and what can never be overlooked.’

‘It is a delicate distinction, certainly,’ was the lady’s reply.

‘But one that I have set myself to make—that I have made, in fact; a Gordian knot that I have cut—a problem that I have solved,’ said Miss Dinah grandiloquently. She liked a good rolling sentence, and in other circumstances would have made an orator. As it was, she spoke at the school feasts and farmers’ meetings; and she spoke more to the purpose than any man in the place. And she knew that she did.

‘Yes?’ repeated Mrs. Smith, searching at her side for something belonging to her work-box.

‘I have taken for an outdoor servant a returned convict!’ shouted Miss Dinah. ‘There! what do you think of that? A returned convict! Baby and I—two lone women—and a convicted criminal for our odd man about the place. Rash or wise? right or wrong? Which do you say now?’

‘That depends on the nature of his offence, and the character of the man,’ answered Mrs. Smith slowly.

‘He was a thief,’ said Miss Dinah; ‘he was caught in the act—red-handed, as the old books say, and sent to work out his ten years on the treadmill. He has come out a reformed character, so at least the chaplain of the prison certifies; and he wants work. If no one will give it to him, he must fall back on his old life; and then what will become of him? So I have plucked up a spirit—taken heart of grace—and engaged him at low wages as a kind of garden help and general handy-man about the place. And not a soul knows his story but our two selves, Baby and me.’

‘And now I and my children,’ said Mrs. Smith with ill-concealed disdain.

Reticent as she was for her own part, the fluent babbling of others seemed to her one of the most contemptible things in the world; and had Solon himself talked of his own affairs, she would have disputed his claim to wisdom.

‘Oh! you don’t count! You won’t peach!’ cried Miss Dinah.

Mrs. Smith raised her calm eyes, and looked her visitor full in the face.

‘Why not?’ she asked steadily.

Miss Dinah laughed; and while she laughed a faint flicker, not so strong as to be called a spasm, passed over Mrs. Smith’s face.

‘Why not? Because you ain’t chatterboxes like the mass of mankind. The people who can keep their own counsel can keep other folks’ secrets; and we all know how close Mrs. Smith of Owlett is, and that no one has found the way yet to make her talk!’

She began with eulogy and she ended with condemnation. The closeness of Mrs. Smith, if admirable as a personal trait, was not helpful to the social life of Grantley Bourne; and Miss Dinah Forbes, with her love of strong interests and energetic action, born of the coarse vigour that characterised her, resented the fact that one of the few houses in the neighbourhood should be given up to a family which added nothing to the tepid little excitements of the place, and was mainly notable for giving no cause for tattle.

‘Would you have everyone’s affairs proclaimed on the house-top, Miss Forbes?’ asked Derwent, who saw that his mother was bored, and so came forward to relieve her; also he never failed an opportunity for a brush with Miss Dinah on his own account. That coarse vigour of hers was as unacceptable to him as to his mother, and he held it to be a kind of public duty to put it down at all hazard.

‘Well, young man, so far as my own affairs are concerned, you would be welcome to have them cried in the market-place, if it would give you any pleasure,’ returned Miss Dinah with a loud laugh. ‘They say that every family has a skeleton in its cupboard somewhere; but I’d give you leave to rummage all mine from now to Doomsday. I think you’d be troubled to find even a stray bone,’ laughing again. ‘It isn’t everyone who can say as much for themselves; but, thank God, we Forbes’s have never been much troubled with these uncomfortable gentry.’

‘People need not have skeletons, as you call I suppose disgraceful family secrets, and yet may not wish to have their names and affairs in everyone’s mouth,’ said Derwent haughtily. ‘Love of retirement is not fear of detection,’ he added, with the air of one who has made an epigram and is pleased with his work.

‘Neatly said, young man,’ shouted Miss Dinah. ‘Quite a copy-book heading, I swear!’

‘And even you have your secrets,’ continued Derwent, as if pursuing a victory. ‘Witness this man whom, pardon me, you

have so unwisely taken into your service. You confess yourself that you do not want the truth of things known here.'

'Why, you young monkey, is his disgrace mine?' cried Miss Forbes. 'Because he has committed a crime, and I want to help him to become an honest man again, and can only do so by concealing his history, am I to be twitted with a secret that would go against me to tell? What rubbish you talk! I should have thought all your logic and mathematics would have taught you better reasoning than that!'

'My reasoning is perfectly sound and logical,' returned Derwent. 'You tell us something as a secret in one breath, and then you boast that you have nothing to conceal in the next. The very fact that you have been rash enough, and I will add a bad citizen enough, to take into your service a returned convict, is in a sense a skeleton; and you feel it to be so, else you would not be so anxious to keep it concealed.'

'You talk like a baby as you are,' said Miss Dinah contemptuously. 'Bad citizen, forsooth! And so a poor fellow is to starve, is he? and be forced to go back to a life of crime because he has once committed a sin which he has repented of and been punished for? If that is where your good citizenship lands you, I am sorry for you! I prefer my bad.'

'Which does not surprise me,' returned Derwent quite as contemptuously, but in a different way—the difference between a polished steel blade and a knotty oaken bludgeon. 'No person who employs a returned convict can possibly understand the ethics of good citizenship. The two things are incompatible.'

'Bah!' cried Miss Forbes. 'I like common sense and plain old-fashioned Christian charity better than a boy's new-fangled notions. Who pardoned the penitent thief, I should like to know? And what Our Master did I think that we may imitate, however humbly and at a distance we are forced to be. As for your ethics and fine words, I hold them just for what they are; and that is bosh!'

'Abuse is not argument, Miss Forbes,' said Derwent coldly.

'Nor pedantry good sense,' she retorted. 'And you are very pedantic, Mr. Derwent Smith. You always were as a little fellow even; when you called a bee an *apis*, and spoke of its cells as hexagonal. Oh, I remember!—and you only just in knickerbockers!'

'I am sorry not to be so fortunate as to please Miss Forbes,' answered Derwent with an affected air.

'Don't talk nonsense, and don't say what is untrue,' she said *rather coarsely*; and all the more so in contrast with his superb

affectation and ultra refinement of tone and bearing. 'You are not sorry at all; you dislike me as much as I disapprove of you; so there is no love lost between us, and no mistake to be made. And you know this as well as I do.'

'I differ from you,' said Derwent stiffly and with a satirical smile. 'I differ from you in many things; and above all in the impartiality with which you seem to regard vice and virtue, unless indeed it be to make an exception in favour of vice. That is not disliking you.'

'Well, I should try to live over it if it were,' said Miss Dinah, with a smile which, if it did not mean either love or pleasure, was yet not so bitter as his.

She and Derwent were always what she called 'sparring;' but in her quality as the elder, and consequently the more magnanimous, and with her substantially kind heart, however rough her ways, she bore no malice, and indeed secretly rather admired the lad for what she called his pluck, than resented his boldness. But he, being young, and proud, and somewhat narrow and over-sensitive, honestly disliked her, and let her see that he did.

'I make no doubt you would; and I too must endeavour to live over your disapprobation,' returned Derwent.

'I tell you what it is; you are a conceited and unchristianlike young fellow,' said Miss Forbes; 'but if you have any good in you at all, and I suppose you have, you'll come right in course of time; and when you have been rubbed down by the world more than you have been yet, I shall live to hear you pipe to quite another tune, I'll be sworn—and I shall be glad of it.'

On which she got up from her chair, calling 'Baby,' who was sitting within a few feet of her giggling to Muriel about 'Mr. Arthur,' as if she had been hailing a man-of-war, and making two strides of the space which separated her from Mrs. Smith, for which an ordinary woman would have required half-a-dozen steps at the least. Then she shook hands with her calm, pale, statuesque hostess in her noisy pseudo-manly way; and, offering her hand to Derwent, said in her boatswain's voice:

'No rancour, young man, and no offence! We must give and take knocks in this world, and keep our tempers if we lose our skins. You think me a fool and I think you a prig; and so we are quits. Good-day to you; and may you live to understand the beauty of that charity which believeth all things, and which hopes and forgives as much as it believes; and not hold yourself, as you do, as a kind of nineteenth-century St. George, sent into the world to fight with all manner of dragons, and not to suffer the presence of sin! We must all suffer the presence of sin, my dear,

and all forgive and forget: and pray God for our enemies as well as our friends. *He* maketh His sun to shine on the just and on the unjust—and *we* may well afford to be charitable to failure! So good-bye again,' shaking his hand which she had been holding warmly clasped during the whole of her oration; 'and forgive me if I have spoken to you too roughly. You see, I don't go in for smooth speeches myself, and you are aggravating. Good-bye. Don't come out. Well, if you must, give Baby your arm. By-by, Dimples. Have a care of sparks, else maybe you'll singe those pretty wings of yours some day.'

Which last words brought her to the door, and to the portico. Settling her sister in the carriage, arranging the dust-shawl about her knees, and seeing that the cushions were in the exact place for her best comfort, she mounted her own higher seat; and planting her feet firmly against the splash-board, took the reins with the air of a coachman driving a four-in-hand, and, raising her whip by way of final salute, trotted off down the drive, one of the worthiest souls and least lovable women to be found in the whole of the county.

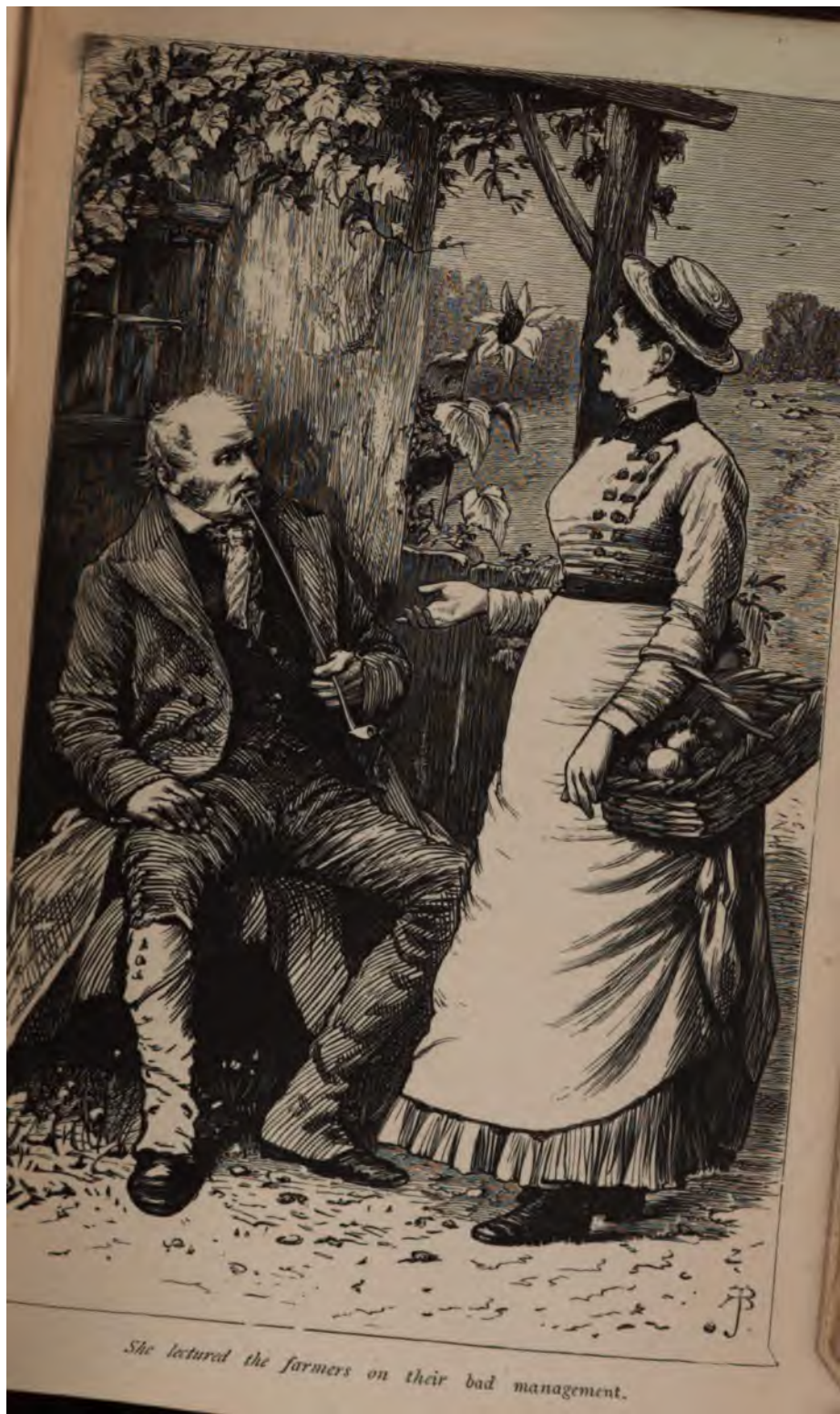
Just now the unloveliness of her womanhood was a far more prominent fact to Derwent than the worth of her soul, and when he went back to the drawing-room he said fretfully:

'That odious woman! how I hate her visits! Why on earth does she come when she must see that we do not want her! And her crazy preachments about her convict gardener! Really, it would seem as if we were never to hear the last of the subject of criminals, and what we are to forgive, and all the rest of it. One would think we were a colony of felons!'

'You are out of temper, my boy,' said Mrs. Smith. 'Miss Forbes is right in her views on this question. If she had not fretted you so much, you would see that for yourself.'

'Never, mother, never!' he returned. 'You can never make me think it so much a matter of indifference, whether a man has done a crime or not, that he has to be forgiven. If crime is evil the criminal must be judged; and with judgment is no mercy. If you take this away you confuse the whole subject, and make right and wrong interchangeable terms. I cannot adopt your view, and never will.'

'Time will show,' said Mrs. Smith, something that looked like tears coming suddenly to her eyes.



She lectured the farmers on their bad management.

CHAPTER XII.

'ROUGH BUT TRUE.'

THAT WAS Miss Dinah Forbes's description of herself.

'Rough but true,' she used to say with her horse laugh and masculine air; but, as Mrs. Smith thought and Lady Machell said, 'why rough?' To be true was all very well, but truth does not necessarily bring with it a voice like a boatswain's and a stride like a grenadier's, the abandonment of every distinctive sign and quality of feminine gentleness, and the adoption of a style of which the ultimate outcome was to make a good woman into a bad copy of a man, one of a pure species into a hybrid.

That was Miss Dinah Forbes's weakness. Affecting to despise men as mere selfish animals, physically strong and morally weak, she yet offered them that sincerest flattery of imitation; and, while vaunting the superiority of women, got rid of all that was purely feminine about her as so much impedimenta in the noble strife between right and wrong—so much evidence of weakness and inferiority.

Nevertheless, she was a fine-natured woman, if she had the weakness of wishing to transact her life like a man; and with all her roughness of exterior, all her affectation of rude power and translated manhood, she did a good day's work in her generation, and was one of the most useful members of the Grantley Bourne society.

She went about among the poor, whom she helped to help themselves rather than pauperised by gratuitous charities—save with the old and feeble and overburdened; and to these she gave, she did not lend—she was a crutch for perpetuity, not only a temporary bridge thrown over a bad bit of road. She advocated education so far as reading, writing, and arithmetic went, and for boys and girls alike; but she insisted more on plain needlework and some knowledge of domestic duties for the latter, and she counted more than the three familiar Rs for the former vanity and vexation. She did not want her maids to be fine ladies, she used to say, nor her groom an educated gentleman; she wanted good honest workers who knew their duty and were not above their station. Within this limit then she upheld the schools; saw that the treats and tea-cakes were well managed and sufficient; and made the mothers of the Jacks and Jills who played truant, or were kept at home to mind the baby, smart for the feebleness of their authority or the selfishness of their ordering.

She lectured the farmers on their bad management in field and fallow, and tried to induce them to adopt new lights concerning

subsoil ploughing, top-dressing, drainage, and the value of stiff clays where properly treated: lights which in general they rejected with a few epithets, that could scarcely be called complimentary, flanking Miss Forbes's name when they spoke of her over their pipes among themselves at the 'Hare and Hounds.' And she lectured the farmers' wives on their bad management in the house, and their ignorance of scientific methods in the poultry yard; and did her best to instil into them correct views on the boiling of potatoes and the uses of soup and a stock-pot, with the good of cleanliness in the pigsties, and of half-picked bones for the fowls. In a word, she bustled and preached and scolded and 'rallied,' and was the best abused and most influential woman in the place.

One day when she was driving in her pony carriage on one of her usual rounds, to call here on the Constantines and there on Farmer Pike, she came upon a wan, haggard, miserable-looking man standing by the wayside, his hollow eyes fixed on the dusty road as if thinking. He was not a bad-looking man, but neither had he a pleasant countenance. His look was of the kind called furtive, one that never met his fellows frankly; but the face was not brutal; and as for that sidelong glance, it might be ingrained dishonesty and shiftiness, but it might also be timidity and nervousness; and Miss Forbes, for all her pseudo-masculinity, was woman enough to give a fellow-creature the benefit of the doubt when she could make one. And she gave this man the benefit of the doubt now.

She stopped her pony.

'I don't know you, and yet your face is not quite strange to me,' she said in her loud, full-bodied voice. 'Where do you come from?'

'Deane, my lady,' said the man. Deane was a village about ten miles off, of which the brother of the Tower ladies was the rector. 'And beg pardon, my lady,' he continued, 'but I know yours and the other lady's. You are Miss Forbes, sister of our rector.'

'Who are you, then?' she asked.

'Bob Rushton, my lady,' he said meekly.

'Bob Rushton!—Bob Rushton!' she repeated; 'what do I know of you? Oh, I remember! sent to gaol for stealing lead. And so you've worked your time out, have you, and are in the world again with another chance?'

'I have my leave,' he said.

'When did you come out?'

'Last week, my lady,' he answered, nervously plucking at his *shabby cap*.

‘And I hope you have come back a reformed character,’ said Miss Dinah severely, in the tone of voice which meant that she was sure he had not, but that he had better look to it if she were to get hold of him.

The man’s pale face flushed.

‘I hope so, my lady,’ he answered; ‘the chaplain he gave me a certificate to say so, and that I had learnt to love the Lord.’

‘Don’t my-lady me,’ said Miss Forbes abruptly. ‘We have only one lady here, and she’s Lady Machell. I am plain Miss Forbes, and ma’am when you speak to me.’

He touched his short-cropped head.

‘Beg pardon, my lady—leastways ma’am,’ he said humbly.

‘And as for your loving the Lord, I hope you will learn to respect your neighbours’ goods, which will be more to the purpose,’ she added sharply.

‘Yes, my lady—ma’am,’ he repeated.

‘And what are you going to do now that you are a free man again?’ she asked. ‘Let me see, what were you? a wheelwright, wasn’t it? Are you going back to your old trade?’

The poor fellow looked down on the road, and up to the sky; but earth and heaven were both silent. He shifted his feet, and twisted his cap in his hands; then the tears came into his eyes, a little too readily for sincerity—or else for self-respect. Miss Forbes chose to believe the latter.

‘That’s just what I don’t know, ma’am,’ he answered sadly; ‘for you see that’s just where it is. I went to the old place, and tried if my old master, Giles Turner—you remember Giles Turner, my lady?—would have me back, but he wouldn’t; and I don’t know where to look for work.’

‘Well, you must have something to do; you can’t starve,’ said Miss Forbes energetically.

The man looked meek, as if the contingency were not quite impossible nor inadmissible; but he went on with his story.

‘You see, my missis, ma’am, she has got a tidy lot of washing to do at the old place,’ he said; ‘enough as will keep her and the littlest child, eleven year old, come Martinmas; but I don’t want to live on her, and she didn’t seem very fain of my going back to her anyway. And though I was sorry to leave my home when I had got it again, I couldn’t stay along with her, and nothing to do for myself.’

‘You certainly cannot live on your wife’s work,’ said Miss Forbes, with something like a snort. ‘You must get something to do for yourself, mind that.’

‘But I can’t tell where to get a day’s work anywheres, ma’am,’

he returned. 'You see, my lady, trouble sends a man down on his luck ever so far; and once a gaol-bird, always a gaol-bird, as they said to me at Giles Turner's, when I asked them for an odd job nows and thens.'

'There! you see what wrong-doing ends in!' cried Miss Dinah with something of a triumphant air. 'There is your good, decent, hard-working wife keeping herself and her children respectably, and you, who ought to be the breadwinner of the house—you who are the man,' contemptuously, 'have been the one to bring them into trouble. Oh, you are a pretty lot, you men!'

'Yes, ma'am,' said Bob Rushton, with an air of apology for being one of the inferior sex.

'Well, I cannot stay and talk with you any longer,' said Miss Forbes sharply, as if it had been the man's fault that she had remained so long. 'Come up to Tower this evening, and I will see what I can do for you. And here—here is a shilling for you to get some food with now. I dare say you want it; you look as if you had not had a good meal for a month. Such wicked folly as it has all been; flinging away your good name and happiness like this!'

'Thank you, my lady,' said the ticket-of-leave man humbly.

He who would might fling hard words at Bob Rushton now. With his own self-respect had gone his claim on the respect of others, and under the name of contrition and religious humility the prison chaplain had broken down his manhood still more thoroughly—from shame thrusting him straight into abjectness.

'Well, come up this evening to Tower,' repeated Miss Dinah as she drove away; and Bob Rushton said: 'Thank you, yes, I will, my lady,' and wondered what the goodness of the Lord was going to give him.

It gave him what we know—the place of out-of-door odd man and general helper, and so set the poor fellow once more on his legs, and gave him a chance which he had no right to expect.

But Miss Dinah Forbes had not Mrs. Smith's power of reticence. Though she was good and kind and generous, she liked that people should call her so; and, so far from objecting to her left hand knowing what her right had done, wished to have the world at large for her audience and applauders. To one after the other she whispered Bob Rushton's story in the strictest confidence, and under solemn promises of secrecy, till every person in the place knew all about him, and who he was, and what he had done; some saying that Miss Forbes was a brave, noble-hearted woman for befriending him, and others—the majority—that she was rash and foolish, and that nothing should have induced them to receive a

returned convict into their establishments. But as people do not say disagreeable things to one's face, preferring rather to kiss one's hand openly and stab one in the back secretly, she did not hear what was murmured against her, only what was said for her; so lived in happy ignorance that almost every one of her trusted gossips had broken faith with her, as she had broken it with Bob Rushton, and that for one who commended there were two who condemned.

Another of her characteristics was her fondness for talking to the working classes, because desirous to know their thoughts and the actualities of their lives. Her passion altogether was for realism; and she discarded social and intellectual idealities, as she discarded ribbons and bibbons and finery of all sorts. Here then was a new field for her to plough:—Bob Rushton's experience of prison life; the rules and regulations under which he lived; the work that he did and the food that he ate; what he thought and what he said; and his fellow-prisoners—what they were like. It was a subject on which she never tired of questioning him, and one on which, when his first shyness had worn off, he was never tired of answering. For by making every other person's crime positively black he fancied that he made his own comparatively white. It is a theory in moral shading, and the key of colour to be applied to action, which most people with dark spots in their own history cherish; and one which specially suited Rushton. He was too sincere to deny his crime altogether, and fall back on the old pretence of mistaken identity or false swearing; and he was not strong enough to justify himself by any plea of necessity through low wages, and the rights of man to equality in goods; he simply tried to throw it into low relief by the superior prominence which he gave to the sins of his fellow-convicts; and so far he was a hypocrite and a sham.

He told her all manner of graphic stories. There was the banker who had made away with everybody's money and ruined thousands by his mad speculations, and all that he might drive a four-in-hand, said Bob Rushton with contempt—that four-in-hand, which was only a symbol, being to him the aim and end of the whole matter. Then there was a murderer, in for life, a furious wretch who had killed his wife in a drunken fit, and who was the plague of the prison and the terror of the officials—always breaking out and getting punished, and with every punishment coming back a greater brute than before. Of him Bob spoke with something that was not contempt—with unfeigned dread and horror—unfeigned but all the same made the most of, and the sanity of the jury who brought him in guilty of manslaughter only, and did

not hang him out of hand, gravely questioned by this amateur Beccaria. He would do for some of the warders yet, said Bob; and it would have been far better to have been done for himself than let good lives be taken that his might be saved for a few years longer. To which view of the case Miss Forbes heartily assented; and clenched her remarks with a sermon on the sin of blood-guiltiness, so vigorous in the picture of the hereafter which she drew that Bob's blood ran cold for the dread lest stealing a few rolls of lead came into the same terrible category.

He spoke too of a nice young fellow, a lawyer's clerk, who had betted on the Derby—'plunged, he called it,' said Bob, proud of this little bit of genteel slang added to his vocabulary—and who borrowed without leave from his employers to meet his liabilities on that Black Monday when they have to be faced somehow. He was as nice a young fellow as ever stepped, said Bob with effusion—a fine genteel lad who had hands like a lady, and who grew a couple of inches after he came in. But there he was safe enough for the next five years, and then where would he find himself?

'Ah, where indeed!' echoed Miss Dinah forcibly; 'the young fool!'

At another time he told her of that apocryphal baronet who floats about the lower strata of society—now driving a cab, now keeping a gin shop, and now to be found, by hearsay, working at the crank and the wheel in prison—not the 'unhappy nobleman,' who is a concretion, but that abstract baronet whose daughter used to be in the Clerkenwell Penitentiary.

At another again, he told her of a real gentleman, a city merchant, who had gambled on the Stock Exchange, and then forged his partner's name to get him out of the mess. He, like the lawyer's young clerk, was also as fine a fellow as ever stepped, according to Bob; and the effusion with which he had spoken of the younger man redoubled when he came to the older. He worked in Bob's gang, when his health would let him; but he was often ailing and in the infirmary, and the two had struck up one of those mysterious prison friendships which defy the authorities to check or prevent.

'Leastways not a friendship quite,' said Bob apologetically. 'We were pals there, but I knew the difference between us, and so did he. We were more like master and man, and would have been if we could.'

But save these two gentlemen thieves for whom Bob had a special liking, he spoke of all the others as manifestly greater *criminals* than himself—he who had only stolen a few pounds of

lead! So at least it seemed to him, and he did his best to make his view Miss Dinah's.

'Real gentlemen they are, some of them, ma'am,' he said to her one day when he was digging up new potatoes under her personal supervision; 'real gentlemen as ought to have known better; not like poor men without education.'

Bob was marked on the prison books 'imperfectly educated;' but he was sharp if no scholar.

'Two wrongs do not make one right, Bob,' said Miss Dinah sententiously; 'and even uneducated men know that murder and theft are crimes. You don't want to be able to read to know that so many pounds of lead are your master's and not yours, and that you have no right to take them; and that if you do, and are caught, you will be punished, and justly so.'

Miss Forbes never lost an opportunity for 'giving a dig,' as she called it, at Bob. She was his salvation in essentials, but she liked to have him, and indeed all her *protégés*, well in hand. She did not approve of people who had done wrong forgetting their sins too readily. She would help them, but at the same time she would keep them humble; and she would make their repentance bitter, if in the end effective. Nevertheless, she was true if rough; and if a man would endure her manner was a faithful friend to him in matter. But there was no doubt about it—her manner was hard to bear.

A week or so after the introduction of Mr. Bob Rushton, the returned convict, into the service of Miss Forbes and the sacred precincts of Grantley Bourne, a small robbery was committed at the Constantines' of Sharpley. They had certain well-bred fowls which they prized as worth so much actual money. They did not care so much for their natural beauty as for their artificial commercial value; and they were very wroth when, one fine morning, the week before the de Paumelle ball, they found the roost untenanted, and their perfectly shaped and feathered silver Hamburgs gone.

As robbery from the premises was not a usual occurrence at Grantley Bourne, there was naturally a loud outcry and a violent commotion; and though some gipsies had been seen prowling about the place—their encampment being in the lane past Owlett—even these general camels of local pilferings were suffered to go free, that the burden of the sin might be laid on Miss Dinah's doubtful penitent. There was not a shadow of proof that he had stolen those silver Hamburgs; and not the remotest reason why he should. He was well fed, so that he did not need them for meat; and he had not been absent from the place long enough to

have sold them at the market town. All the same, the next-to-universal voice of the community accused him of the theft, and the majority made common cause with the Constantines in their prayer for his immediate dismissal. A kind of panic went through the place, and the demand for revolvers and knuckledusters, iron shutters and bells, mastiffs and life-preservers, surprised the tradesmen at the county town. They had not heard of any gang of burglars hereabouts to justify this formidable array of articles for self-defence; but folks who live in a very quiet, very regular country place, easily take alarm at anything unusual; and the robbery of a hen-roost is to them as grave a matter as, to others accustomed to wild corners, is the murder of a tax-gatherer, or the carrying off by bandits of a Sindico—with his ears sent as the first instalment of his whole person in parcels, should the ransom fixed on be not forthcoming.

There were a few however who did not join in this outcry; and those few were among the most noteworthy. The Machells did not. Sir Gilbert and Wilfrid, judicial-minded as became the present chairman of Quarter Sessions and the future High Sheriff of the county, wanted evidence before condemning even a ticket-of-leave man of an unproved crime; and Arthur supplemented this judicial reserve by the more purely human sentiment, if oddly worded, that the poor devil was hardly treated and not given fair play.

Mr. Oliphant quoted texts which were more to the purpose of the pulpit than the police, and impossible to work in a community composed of shaky members, if they would have done well enough in a society of saints. Mrs. Smith said very little, according to her wont, but that little went to the belief that a man need not necessarily be bad all through because he had once, in a moment of weakness, committed even a crime; and Muriel pleaded eloquently for trust in human nature, dear child; as if human nature and high morality were synonyms, while evil was only an adventitious circumstance that crept in through undefended places and spoilt the original architecture.

But Derwent was implacable. It was an insult, he said, to all the honest workmen of the place to have this convicted felon, this rogue and vagabond, associated with them; and, whether he had committed this present theft or not, society at Grantley Bourne, representing respectability, owed it to itself to cast him out from its midst, because of his past iniquity. He was very hard in his righteousness, very unforgiving and immaculate. Even those people who thought with him said that he was really too severe *and took absurdly lofty views*. They wished the man to be got

rid of, because it was inconvenient and disturbing to have him there; but when you come to requiring such a very high standard, and to showing such an almost fanatical severity—well, then they parted company, and thought Mr. Derwent Smith decidedly going too far. Still it is an awkward thing to do to tell a lad that he ought to overlook the fact of felony—shake hands with a returned convict—let bygones of crime be bygones, and no word of reproach to follow; and that—as he put it in his narrow and therefore unjust way—it really did not much matter whether a man had been a criminal or not. Given that state of mind which it pleases silly people to call repentance, he may be reinstated in the good graces of the world as if nothing had happened.

He would have none of this pottering with the eternal laws of right or wrong, he said with his archangelic air; and his mother and he had on this subject the only discussion which had ever in any way approached to a serious disagreement—she inclining to mercy and generosity, he strict for condemnation and repulsion.

But the neighbourhood reckoned without its host, if it thought that Miss Dinah Forbes was to be moved by any representations that it could make. Being convinced, and justly so, that Bob Rushton had no more to do with the theft of the silver Ham-burghs than she herself, she did not choose to sacrifice him to popular clamour, and stood by her black sheep gallantly. No representations stirred her; nor did any amount of hints that she would be socially blackballed if she did not yield to the wishes of the community. She was true if rough; and while she prodded Bob daily with the sharp prongs of invective and reminders of those unlucky rolls of lead, she defended him against her foes from without, and made his cause her own. And as there is a large latent fund of justice in the English character, and the pendulum of public opinion which has swung too far one way is sure to go back the corresponding beat the other, she knew that she had only to bide her time to be honoured where now she was condemned, and her constancy vaunted as a virtue in place of her obstinacy decried as a vice. That theory of action and reaction, excess and compensation, was a favourite one with her; and so far she was right. But if the beat goes too far, and you die of a broken heart before the pendulum swings back? The theory will not have much comforting effect on your soul then.

This retention by Miss Forbes of her convict handy-man, and the certainty of the neighbourhood that he had stolen the Constantine fowls, and that they would all find themselves some night in bed with their throats cut, had an extraordinary effect; it brought Mrs. Smith to Tower out of her prescribed time for calling.

She generally let months pass into years before she returned any one's visit; but she paid back Miss Dinah's the week after it was made—on the day preceding the de Paumelle ball; whereby she nearly caused the lady of Tower a fit of apoplexy from astonishment.

After she had sat there a little while—she was alone—she said, with more show of feeling than she was accustomed to display:

‘I have been thinking a great deal about your *protégé*, Miss Forbes. Which prison did you say he came from?’

‘Broadmoor,’ said Miss Forbes.

Mrs. Smith, troubled as she often was with a spasmodic kind of cough, put her handkerchief to her face. For a moment her breath failed her, and she could not speak. She conquered her annoying spasm however before long, and spoke again in the quiet way usual to her; but perhaps with a little more emotion than she would have cared to show if she could have entirely controlled it.

‘I think you have been so good to keep your man against all the opposition that has been raised so suddenly,’ she went on to say, fixing her beautiful eyes on her hostess, perhaps a shade less steadily than usual; ‘but I think too, without departing from your principles, we might do something to lessen the discomfort of the position to you both.’

‘No discomfort to me, Mrs. Smith,’ cried Miss Dinah lustily; ‘it don’t affect me two straws what folks say of me. I know my own mind, and I do my duty so far as I know it; and I let the world rave its loudest and hottest as long as it likes. Hard words break no bones; and so long as I have a whole skin I don’t mind about the rest.’

‘You are quite right, and no one honours your independence more than I,’ said Mrs. Smith; ‘but the poor fellow himself might be better off under other conditions. Suppose we make a fund to start him fairly in life where he is not known? I would subscribe to it to the utmost of my ability. It seems to me such a pity to live in a place where a past disgrace is known; a new life in a new neighbourhood is so far preferable.’

‘Certainly, in general, I quite agree with you; but not in this case,’ said Miss Forbes. ‘The man is as weak as a carrot. He wants keeping up to the mark by a strong hand; and I know that if I let go my hold of him he will drift back into evil ways in less than a month. No, I shall keep him with me, thank you kindly, and I shall brave it out. But you are very good,’ she added, rising and shaking hands with Mrs. Smith warmly.

‘I am sorry you do not see the thing in the same light as I do,’ then said Mrs. Smith after a moment’s pause, sinking back into

her usual indifferentism and statuesque stolidity. 'Of course you are the best judge of your own actions. I only wished you to understand that I would be glad to help if you thought of sending your man away to some place where he was not known, and where his chances would be greater than here, where his story has so unfortunately leaked out.'

'For the reasons I have stated I think not,' answered Miss Dinah sturdily; and Mrs. Smith, making a slight bow, signified that the conversation was at an end.

Soon after this she left; and what she felt there was no one to see, nor what she did when she was alone in her carriage, and recognised that her effort had failed.

'Lord bless my soul, the woman has a heart, after all!' was Miss Dinah's commentary when she had gone. 'Well, there are wonders still to be met with!—that mummy proving herself a living woman! After this I shall believe anything of anybody, and despair of none!'

'Still waters run deep,' gurgled Miss Aurora girlishly.

'So they do, Baby; clever little thing that you are!' answered Miss Dinah admiringly; 'but for my own part I like more plain and straightforward characters—people that one can read without trouble, and that one has not to spend half one's life in making guesses at!'

'Ah! but everyone is not so straightforward as you, Diny,' said Baby.

And Miss Dinah, giving her a kiss, answered:

'You are a treasure; and if I can make you happy, and keep you well, I care for nothing else. Has your wreath come, dear, for to-morrow? How pretty you will look in it, and how proud I shall be of my little sister!'

Yes, this masculine, loud-voiced lady of Tower was undeniably rough, but as undeniably true; a warm friend, but in spite of her rude words, which seemed to express such heat and bitterness, only a tepid enemy, and to be softened at the worst moments by an appeal to the human side of her. Neither Mrs. Smith nor Derwent understood her now; perhaps in the future they would, should occasion occur when the realities of a character are of more avail than its graces.

(To be continued.)

Four Great Theatrical Successes.

OF all the successes within the reach of art, none are so flattering, so intoxicating, so real as those gained by the great actor. The man who writes a famous book, the artist who paints a famous picture, gathers his fame by hearsay—he has few opportunities of being an eye-witness of the effect produced by his works; the personal praise of some few friends, the laudation of a dozen newspapers, qualified by strictures that mingle a considerable element of the bitter with the sweet, these are the most substantial offerings his *amour propre* can expect. With the actor it is otherwise. All who come beneath the spell of his art, must come face to face with him; his eyes and ears proclaim to him his triumphs; he beholds hundreds, perhaps thousands, hanging breathless upon his lips, swayed hither and thither, laughing or weeping, diverted or awe-struck, as he wills to vary the intonation of his voice or regulate the muscles of his countenance.

Herein lies the extraordinary fascination which the stage exercises over all imaginative temperaments, which lures silly boys and girls from more prosaic and substantial callings, which causes its less gifted professors to cling to it amidst misery and degradation. In no other calling are the prizes so few, the blanks so numerous. The most fortunate have to undergo toils, privations, heart-sickening disappointments, before they reach the longed-for goal, that would appal the most persevering and energetic man of business; fame and success come slowly, and only after long waiting and years of unappreciated study. A few, a very few, have leaped into fame in a single night, have entered the theatre nobodies and left it world-famous. But then the dark and bitter years which have gone before that night! The heroic sorrows over which the enthralled spectators have just been weeping are as nothing to those that lie buried within the actor's heart, beneath that 'starry pointing pyramid' which their enthusiasm has just called into being.

In the annals of the English stage during three hundred years but few exceptions to this dark picture of the littleness which precedes the greatness can be found. One of those fortunate beings upon whose life the glittering footlights never threw their shadow was *David Garrick*.

On October 19, 1741, the little theatre in Goodman's Fields—in which, in consequence of the new licensing act, recently passed, stage plays could no longer legally be performed, except by certain subterfuges and evasions of the statute—put forth a bill announcing that on that evening there would be given 'a concert of vocal and instrumental music divided into two parts.' After this line followed an 'N.B.,' which, like a lady's P.S., contained the whole gist of the matter. It stated that 'between the two parts of the concert will be presented *gratis* an historical play called the "Life and Death of King Richard the Third"' (here follows a short synopsis of the incidents of the drama, which we need not transcribe). After which it informed all whom it might interest that the part of King Richard would be sustained by 'a gentleman who has never appeared upon any stage.' The performance was to conclude with 'A Ballad Opera in one act called the "Virgin Unmasked."' And tickets were to be obtained at the Fleece Inn, close by, where the best box seats could be purchased at three shillings apiece.

Playbills in that age were not always strictly veracious, but of course *nous avons changé tout cela* nowadays. In the heading the building was styled '*the late theatre*,' and it informed its patrons that, although they paid to hear the concert, the play was thrown in for nothing, and no money was taken at the doors. These things made up the traditionary coach-and-six which the proprietors drove through the Act of Parliament. Again, it was not 'the gentleman's first appearance' upon any stage, as he had been performing previously at Ipswich.

Although this theatre had been the scene of more than one first appearance, and dire failure, the *début* of the present aspirant, who was not unknown in theatrical and literary circles, excited some curiosity, and the house was crowded. Among the spectators were two celebrated actors, Macklin and Smith. The scene is thus described by Percy Fitzgerald in his 'Life of Garrick:'

'It was recollected long afterwards that when he came upon the scene and saw the crowded house he was disconcerted, and remained a few seconds without being able to go on. But he soon recovered. No wonder it surprised the audience. It was all so new. They found themselves in a fresh dramatic world, and were at first mystified, and scarcely knew whether they were to sanction this daring violation of all the old sacred rules. What astonished them was the absence of the "plain chaunt" or "sing-song," the dead level declamation, now rising, now sinking, either dry, hoarse, and croaking, or ear-piercing. This was free and natural. The surprising novelty was remarked, that he seemed to identify himself with the part. They were amazed at his wonder-

ful power of feature. The stupendous passions of Richard were seen in his face before he spoke, and outstripped his words. There was a perpetual change and vivacity. One effect at last overbore all hesitation, and the delighted audience found relief for their emotions in rapturous shouts of applause. It was when he flung away the prayer-book after dismissing the mayor, that the audience first seemed to discover that true genius was before them.' From this time the success continued to grow with every scene. In the fourth act came a crisis: his voice began to fail; but an orange restored its power and carried him on triumphantly to the end.

The next morning he was the town talk; at the coffee-houses he was the all-absorbing theme, and the journals teemed with his praises. The 'Daily Post' said: 'Last night was performed *gratis* the tragedy of "King Richard the Third" at the late theatre in Goodman's Fields, when the character of Richard was performed by a gentleman who never appeared before, and whose reception was the most extraordinary and great that was ever known upon such an occasion.'

On the third or fourth nights Alexander Pope went to see him. 'That young man never had his equal and will never have a rival,' was his dictum; nevertheless expressing a fear that he would be 'spoiled by praise.' Three times did the English Horace honour the performance with his presence.

On the first seven night, however, the receipts averaged only 30*l*. But after this came the rush. On November 26 the house was crammed, and hundreds had been turned away by five o'clock in the afternoon (the entertainment commenced at six). The Western theatres were now abandoned; a stream of carriages nightly extended from Temple Bar to Whitechapel; nobles, legislators, bishops struggled for seats. Pitt pronounced this new actor to be 'the only one in England;' and the 'new actor' supped with Murray, and dined with Halifax, Chesterfield, and Sandwich. His emolument had increased from one pound a night to half the profits, and Drury Lane was soon glad to offer him a salary of six hundred a year.

Circumstances, however, almost as much as genius, helped David Garrick to this prodigious success; he appeared at, for him, a fortunate moment, amidst a dearth of histrionic talent. Quin, a tumid stagey actor, was the brightest star of the theatrical horizon. Davies, a dramatic historian, has admirably contrasted the opposing styles of the two artists in a notice upon Rowe's 'Fair Penitent,' in which they appeared together. After describing Quin's frigid pomposity, he goes on to say: 'When, after *long and eager expectation*, I beheld little Garrick, then young and

light, come bounding upon the stage, Heavens! what a transition! It seemed as if a whole century had been swept over in the space of a single scene; old things were done away with and a new order at once brought forward, bright and harmonious and clearly destined to dispel the barbarisms and bigotry of a tasteless age too long attached to the prejudices of custom and superstitiously devoted to the illusions of imposing declamation.'

On June 10, 1776, scarcely thirty-five years later, warned by failing powers that his days of triumph must be brought to a close, the great actor, now rich in all Fortune's gifts, made his final bow to an adoring public; there was not a dry eye within the walls of Drury Lane that night; and as, slowly and reluctantly, he passed behind the curtain, a mournful cry of 'Farewell' broke from hundreds of trembling lips like a mighty sob.

About six months previously a young lady from the provinces, who had been strongly recommended to the great manager, made her *début* upon the same boards, as Portia in the 'Merchant of Venice.' Her name was Sarah Siddons. But the hopes of her admirers were sadly disappointed: she failed, distressingly failed. She was a delicate, fragile-looking, beautiful young creature, but her dress was ugly and faded; nervousness so mastered her that she tottered rather than walked upon the stage, her every movement was awkward, and her voice, naturally weak, dropped at the end of every sentence to an indistinct whisper. A few nights afterwards, Garrick, who treated her as a *protégée*, desirous of giving her another chance, cast her for Lady Anne in 'Richard the Third.' But nervousness again paralysed all her powers; Garrick's wonderful eyes struck her with terror; in the love scene she forgot the direction he had impressed upon her in the morning, to keep her back to the audience, so that the expression of his features might be clearly visible, and his terrible look of rebuke made her almost faint away. It was her last appearance with him. Could this be the stately and awful Sarah Siddons of our grandfathers' days? Seven years later, when the great actor was mouldering in his grave, the provinces were ringing with this lady's fame, and the managers of Drury Lane resolved she should again challenge a London verdict. With the remembrance of the past still vivid in her memory, it is no wonder that the actress, although now matured in her art and confident in her well-tryed powers, should look forward to the great ordeal upon which her whole future depended with the most intense anxiety. During the fortnight preceding she fretted herself almost into a nervous fever, and, as if this were not enough, she was presently attacked by a hoarseness that threatened the loss of voice. Fortunately, it

passed away just in time, and when the awful night arrived never had her articulation been clearer.

The house was crammed from floor to ceiling; the excitement was immense. She herself has left us a description of her sensations: 'The awful consciousness that one is the sole object of attention to that immense space lined as it were with human intellects from top to bottom and all around, it may be imagined but can never be described, and by me can never be forgotten.'

The play selected was Southern's tragedy of 'Isabella, or the Fatal Marriage,' and the part of the heroine was admirably adapted to display the powers of such a mistress of the passions of pity and terror. Not long was actress or audience left in doubt. The sweetness of her tones, her heartrending grief, her awful agony, spell-bound every spectator: men were dissolved in tears, women fainted or were carried out in hysterics; during the last act sobs and cries resounded through the house; and when the curtain fell it was amidst such a transport of applause as had scarcely ever been heard within those walls. 'When I reached my own quiet fireside,' she tells us, 'from that scene of reiterated shouts and plaudits, I was half dead, and my joy and thankfulness were of too solemn and overpowering a nature to admit of words or even tears.'

Of course the journals overflowed with praise; but the critic in the 'Post' modified his raptures by stating that at times 'her passion was too brisk and fluttering and without sufficient *pauses*.' Again we are tempted to ask if this can be the lady who in after years never addressed her servants save in the sepulchral notes of a tragedy queen? On the second night the success was still more pronounced; the very lobbies were crowded with ladies and gentlemen of the highest fashion; Sheridan was weeping in his box, and tears were coursing down the dark cheek of Fox in the orchestra. Night after night the *furore* increased. Ladies who found it impossible to get a seat in the boxes hazarded their lives by struggling through the fierce crowd into the pit; the newspapers were filled with paragraphs, and dressmakers advertised themselves as her costumiers. The street in which she lodged was daily crowded with coroneted carriages; crowds gathered about the stage door to see her go in; parties she attended were packed to suffocation with people who stood on chairs and tables peering over their neighbours' heads to get a glimpse of her, as though she were some abnormal creation quite different to ordinary humanity. The salary at which she opened was only 10*l.* a week, but by the *end of the season* she had realised 1,500*l.* The next season, a

period of seven months, her earnings amounted to 2,000*l.*, the gross receipts of her two benefits being 1,450*l.*

On her second visit to Edinburgh she created a *furor* greater, if possible, than that even of the metropolis. In one day, 2,557 people applied for box seats which could accommodate only 650. Crowds assembled as early as two o'clock in the afternoon, and after the performance was over footmen would take up their stand at the doors to secure their masters' places for the following night.

This eagerness formed a striking contrast to the coldness of her reception on her first visit. The house was full, but the audience was freezing. In vain did she exert herself and strain her every power; she could elicit no more animation from the spectators than though they had been mummies. At length, having reached the climax of one of her finest scenes, she paused amidst a profound silence, which was presently broken by a man's voice in the pit exclaiming, 'That's nae sae bad!'

Ap[ro]pos of Edinburgh, it is related that in the last act of 'Isabella,' her agonised cry of 'Oh my Biron!' was so awful that a young lady fell into hysterics, and was carried out of the boxes screaming, 'Oh my Biron, my Biron!' The young lady was Miss Gordon of Gight, and, strange to say, was afterwards the mother of Lord Byron. Making every allowance for changes of public taste, Sarah Siddons must have been a marvellous actress. When the great actress played 'Jane Shore,' ladies swooned and men sobbed aloud; in the 'Gamester' the pit used to curse and yell at the villain Stukely; and timid persons, unable to endure the excitement, would stand out in the lobbies and look through the small panes of glass in the box doors, content to only watch the expression of her countenance,

The Kembles had been connected with the stage from the time of the Restoration. The grandfather of John and Sarah played with Betterton, Charles II.'s favourite actor. The latter began, as we have seen, her London career under Garrick, and finished it as Lady Randolph to Macready's Glenalvon. Fanny Kemble is still living; thus only four generations separate us from the actors of the seventeenth century.

Hazlitt says: 'The enthusiasm she excited had something idolatrous about it. We can conceive nothing grander. She embodied to our imagination the fables of mythology, of the heroic and the deified mortals of elder time. She was not less than a goddess or a prophetess inspired by the gods. Power was seated on her brow; passion radiated from her breast as from a shrine. She was tragedy personified.' Not until 1812 did she take leave of the stage. It was in one of her greatest parts, Lady

Macbeth; and never, it is said, did she act more grandly. At the close of the sleep-walking scene, a breathless silence was succeeded by a roar of acclamation almost terrible, and a universal demand that the play should there terminate. There was artistic feeling in those days; the mob audience of to-day would have their money's worth to the last farthing, even if a concert-room 'comique' were announced to succeed a Siddons—that is to say, unless the beer hours had nearly expired.

Perhaps, however, the most extraordinary dramatic success on record was that of a man who has recently passed away, 'Master' Betty, or 'the Young Roscius.' Like Garrick's, his career was another exceptional one, all light and no shadow.

Henry West Betty, Irish by descent, was born at Shrewsbury in 1791. His father was a man of independent means; his mother was a fine reader, and took great delight in instructing her son in that pleasant art. It seems to be highly probable that the parents discovered his dramatic talents at a very early period and fostered them. When about eleven years old he was taken to the Belfast theatre to see Mrs. Siddons play Elvira in Kotzebue's tragedy of 'Pizarro.' From that hour an all-absorbing passion for the stage seized upon him.

His father took him to Atkins, the manager, who handed him over to Hough, the prompter, and under that gentleman the stage-struck boy received his first lesson in the histrionic art. The teacher quickly discovered that his pupil would do him credit; he had a bright intelligent face, and a grace of manner and movement not only remarkable in one so young, but exceptional at any age. His docility was greater even than his talent; whatever he was directed to do he could instantly accomplish, and was sure never to forget; his feelings could take the impression of every passion and sentiment; whatever was properly presented to his mind he could immediately grasp; and he seemed to seize by a kind of intuitive sagacity the spirit of every sentence, and the prominent beauties of every remarkable passage.

He made his *début* at Belfast in 1803 as Osman in Voltaire's 'Zara.' His success was immediate and assured. He afterwards appeared as Douglass, Rollo, Romeo, and Hamlet, at Cork, Waterford, Limerick, Dublin. These were the days of the 'United Irishmen,' and the streets of Dublin were cleared by a certain hour at night; but the authorities extended the time in honour of 'the young Roscius,' as the Milesians dubbed him,¹ and notices were inserted

¹ It was Dublin that bestowed the title of Roscius upon David Garrick.

in the bills that people leaving the theatre during his engagement would not be stopped until after eleven o'clock. From Ireland he proceeded to Scotland, where he created an even greater sensation. Jackson, the Edinburgh manager, published the following fulsome notice of his acting: 'It is one of those singularities of Nature that neither history nor tradition can furnish, but which is now beheld by us, but can never be seen again till the Author of all things shall, when he thinks meet, condescend to endue another stripling in *embryo* with a similar incredible combination of endowments for the gratification of contemporary admiration.'

Home, the author of 'Douglass,' then seventy years of age, sat at the wings to see him play Young Norval. Mistaking the vociferous applause which greeted the end of the play for a call for the author, he stepped before the curtain and bowed his acknowledgments, thus sharing, or rather appropriating, the ovation intended for the actor. The next day, however, he was handsome enough in his compliments. 'This is the first time,' he said, 'I ever saw the part of Douglass played; that is, according to my idea of the character as at the time I conceived and wrote it.' Whether he really believed that this boy played the part better than did Spranger, Barry, and other great actors who had essayed it, or whether vanity coloured his judgment, it would be difficult to say.

At Glasgow, a critic who dared to find fault with the idol's performance raised such a storm about his head that he was obliged to leave the city!

Macready, the father of the great William, who loved to drive a hard bargain, engaged him for Birmingham at 10*l.* a night, with benefit terms. When the boy arrived, however, Macready was seized with such doubts as to whether he would tickle the Brummagem palate that he tried to break off the engagement. Master Betty's friends made no objection, provided his expenses were paid back to Edinburgh. But the worthy *entrepreneur* hit upon a plan by which he hoped to save his money and yet avail himself of the star's talents. He offered to share with him after sixty pounds a night! The offer was accepted. The success was prodigious; and, instead of ten pounds a night, the cautious manager had to hand him over an average of fifty.

It was at this time that the patentees of Drury Lane offered him an appearance at the National Theatre—the terms half the receipts of his benefit. Macready, whose opinion of his talents was now altered, and who probably, like all hard drivers of bargains, loved to see other people's purses wrung, advised him to refuse

anything under fifty pounds a night. The advice was taken, and the negotiations were suspended; upon which the Covent Garden managers stepped in and offered the required sum.

Pending his opening in London, which was arranged for December of that year (1804), he visited other English towns, creating an ever-increasing mania wherever he went. At Liverpool, crowds eager to secure places for the night would assemble round the box-office at an early hour in the morning, and when it was opened the crush was so fierce that gentlemen were bruised and half suffocated, had their clothes torn to ribbons, their hats and even their shoes carried away. For his fourteen performances there he cleared, with benefit, 1,520*l*.

But it was reserved for London to crown the madness. At one o'clock in the afternoon, on December 1, 1804, a prodigious concourse filled Bow Street and the piazzas of Covent Garden Theatre; towards evening the numbers and the pressure became so alarming, that it was thought necessary to send for a guard of soldiers to close the entrance and form passages and approaches; but for this precaution, a terrible catastrophe must have occurred. A few minutes after the doors were opened, the house was crammed. Gentlemen, knowing every seat in the boxes was taken, yet forced their way through and sprang over into the pit to steal a march upon the pitites; others, less scrupulous, took forcible possession of box seats previously engaged, and could not be dislodged; every lobby and passage was jammed with people, content to pay any price if they could only peer at the stage through a hole or a crevice; fainting women, and even men, by scores had to be drawn out of the mass, and gentlemen wedged into suffocating corners were kept from swooning only by their wives constantly fanning them. Drury Lane, with a very weak bill, took over 300*l*. from the overflow of its neighbour.

The play was 'Barbarossa,' an English version of Voltaire's 'Merope.' The first act, in which the star did not appear, was performed in dumb show, so great was the uproar. But when at length Barbarossa gave the order for Achmet to be brought before him, it was as though an enchanter's wand had been suddenly waved over the clamorous concourse, turning it to stone; a death-like silence fell upon it; not a movement, not a whisper was heard; the very breath was held in intensity of expectation. As he stepped from the wing, attired in the close-fitting dress of a slave, which made his small figure appear even smaller upon that great stage, the spell was lifted, and there burst forth a roar of applause almost terrible in its force. The boy, although remarkable for *his modest and unassuming manners*, had a marvellous self-posses-

sion, and, although moved, was by no means flurried by this great reception.

Mrs. Inchbald, who was present, complained that 'his preaching-like tones' fatigued her; but she acknowledged that in the latter acts he exhibited great fire, spirit, and impassioned variety. 'He is a clever little boy,' she adds; 'and had I never seen boys act before, I might have thought him exquisite.' The green-room, however, caught the infection from the audience, and hailed him a prodigy, a transcendent genius, a second and greater Garrick! 'Nature has endowed him with genius we shall vainly attempt to find in any one of the actors of the present day,' wrote one of his critics.

That the boy was remarkably clever there can be as little doubt as that his talents were in no degree commensurate with the sensation he created. As it has been before said, his carriage and action were beautifully graceful, his aptitude keen, his capacity for study and his memory prodigious; as an instance, he is said to have studied 'Hamlet' in less than four days. But although his voice was powerful and had a fine depth of tone, it was heavy and monotonous; his delivery was frequently too rapid for distinctness, and sometimes noisy to ranting; besides which, it was disfigured by strong provincialisms and an absence of the letter *h*, the result of imperfect education. But, above all, he had no originality of conception. Hough, the Belfast prompter, taught him all, at least all his early and most successful parts. In the books out of which he studied every inflection of the voice was marked, every movement of the arms, and even of the legs. He owed everything to his instructor, and he was not ungrateful; one of the first uses which he made of his good fortune being to settle an annuity upon him.

His unprecedented success was partly the result of one of those mental epidemics which have at times infected the public mind in all ages and all countries, and partly of that love for the abnormal which has always been an English characteristic.

'Any strange being there makes a man,' says Caliban, and the satirical remark will seemingly never become obsolete. We may take some heart at our own theatrical shortcomings when we read that John Kemble, Mrs. Siddons, George Frederick Cooke, Mrs. Jordan, Bannister, and other bright lights—any one of whom would now make a star of the first magnitude—played to empty benches, while Master Betty was drawing the whole town; and that Charles Young, Charles Kemble, and all the great actors except *the* Kemble and his great sister, had to play second to this 'puny whipster.' But, as a much worse specimen of the taste of

our grandfathers, Hazlitt tells us that after hissing John Philip in Sir Giles Overreach, boxes, pit, and gallery joined in one shout of applause when Madame Sachi, the rope-dancer, 'ran up the stage to the two-shilling gallery, and then ran down again as fast as her legs could carry her.'

The Betty mania was now at its height; even the all-absorbing Bonaparte was half forgotten in this new theme. Titled ladies contended for the honour of having him seated behind them in their carriages; Opie painted him as Norval; Northcote in a Vandyke costume, leaving the tomb of Shakespeare, thereby intimating that he had stolen thence the Promethean fire of the almighty genius. 'Gentleman Smith,' the original Charles Surface, now an old man, came all the way from Bury St. Edmunds to see him act, and after the performance presented him with a seal bearing Garrick's likeness. 'Mr. Garrick,' said the veteran light comedian, 'bade me, during his last illness, keep this until I should meet with a player who acted from Nature and Feeling; such I have found in you.' When overwork brought upon him a short illness, bulletins were issued at intervals during the day, and were waited for as eagerly as though he had been some great personage upon whom the fate of the kingdom depended. Charles James Fox read Zanga, in Young's tragedy of the 'Revenge,' to him, and William Pitt one evening made a motion of adjournment in the Commons in order that he and the other members might see him act some particular part; while the University of Cambridge made him the subject of a prize medal, the theme being '*Quid noster Roscius egit?*'

Cumberland says: 'How delicious to be caressed by dukes, and, what is better, by dukes' daughters, flattered by wits, feasted by aldermen, and stuck up in the windows of print shops! What encouragement does this great enlightened nation hold up to merit! I declare I saw with surprise a man who led about a bear lose all his popularity in the street where this exquisite young gentleman had his lodgings; the people ran to see him at the window, and left bear and bear leader in solitude. I saw this exquisite young gentleman wafted to his morning's rehearsal in a vehicle that to my vulgar optics seemed to wear upon its polished doors a ducal crown. I looked to see if John Kemble were on the braces, or Cooke, perchance, behind the coach. I saw the lacqueys at their post, but Glenalvon was not there. I found John Kemble sick at home, and said to myself—

Oh, what a time have you chosen out, brave Caius,
To wear a kerchief; would you were not sick!

Besides pictures of his person of all degrees of likeness and unlikeness, numbers of caricatures adorned the printsellers' windows. One represented him striding from roof to roof of the two great theatres, for he was now playing at both, as we shall shortly see, and Kemble and Sheridan beneath looking up ruefully at the new Colossus. Another pictured him and Kemble mounted on the same horse, Kemble behind, and these words coming out of young Betty's mouth: 'I don't mean to affront you; but when two persons ride on a horse, one must ride behind!'

His engagement at Covent Garden was to play three nights weekly; so Drury Lane made an arrangement with him for the off nights. For the first three performances he received 50*l.*; for the remainder (twenty-five), 100*l.*, besides four benefits, each of which was, with presents, worth 1,000*l.* The gross receipts for the twenty-eight nights amounted to 17,210*l.* 11*s.*, the nightly average being 614*l.* 13*s.* 3*d.* The largest sum taken in one night, 752*l.*, was to 'Douglass.' On three occasions the takings exceeded 700*l.*

After making another tour of the provinces, he returned the following autumn to Drury Lane; but the spell was dissolved, the mania subsiding; a clique of the more judicious playgoers organised a determined opposition to popular folly. The average receipts fell to 341*l.* a night, or little more than half of those of a few months back; his benefit realised only 301*l.*, being lower than those of Mrs. Jordan, Miss Duncan, Braham, and Bannister, all of which took place about the same time. More than once the management appears to have purposely set him in a ludicrous position; as, for instance, when in *Gustavus Vasa* they placed him between the two tallest and stoutest men in the company, and gave him Mrs. St. Leger, a woman of enormous proportions, for mother.

His powers of attraction diminished nightly, and the days of his greatness, at least in London, were over. They had been brief, brilliant—and profitable.

Yet, although the metropolis had had enough of 'the young Roscius,' the provincials still flocked to see him as eagerly as ever. At fifteen, however, he entered himself as a student at Cambridge for the Church! But the spells of *Thalia* and *Melpomene* are not so easily broken, and upon the completion of his education he returned once more to the arena of his boyish triumphs. Maturity had not ripened his talents. He continued to act with very indifferent success until his final retirement, which took place at Southampton in 1824.

Quite another kind of story of a great theatrical success is the fourth and last I purpose to narrate. As being purely the result

of a splendid genius unaided by circumstances, it surpasses them all, even that of Garrick, who had made many friends before he appeared in Goodman's Fields. Edmund Kean had not one to give him the encouragement of a single hand. There was not a misery known to his profession that he had not experienced. He had many a time been hungry and houseless; he had walked long journeys, carrying his child upon his back, while his poor wife, almost again a mother, trudged wearily at his side; and, perhaps more bitter than all, his heart had been chafed and fretted for years by the consciousness of genius unappreciated, wasted before the bores and boobies of small provincial towns.

But his chance came at last. While playing at Teignmouth, in 1814, he was so fortunate as to attract the attention of Dr. Deny, who recommended him to Mr. Pascoe Grenfell, one of the committee of Drury Lane. Some little time afterwards Arnold, the manager, went down to Dorchester to see him act, and offered him an engagement for three years at eight, nine, and ten pounds per week. To the poor stroller who had never received more than two pounds a week in his life this was a grand fortune; and then the passionate hope of fame!

Unfortunately, however, a little previous to this, he had made an arrangement to open with Elliston at the Wych Street Theatre. I have no space to go into the entanglements that followed; suffice it to say, that this, together with a certain timidity on the part of the directors of Drury Lane to give the poor unknown actor an appearance, kept him idle in London for nearly three months. His sufferings during that time must have far surpassed all those that had gone before; the tortures of hope deferred verging almost into despair, were added to the griping pangs of poverty. How he contrived to exist during those terrible weeks was afterwards as much a mystery to himself as to others; 8*l.* was all the money he received from the theatre; his only other resources were pawning and selling the few things he possessed, and such small credit as so shabby a person could procure. A dinner was a luxury as far beyond his reach as hock or champagne; dry bread was his staple article of food. Fortunately, his landlady had conceived a profound belief that he was destined for great things, and did not press for her rent; this last circumstance saved them, otherwise the struggle could not have been sustained.

For 130 consecutive nights the receipts of Drury Lane had been below the expenditure. Any experiment was justifiable under such desperate circumstances; the little man 'in the capes'¹ should have

¹ A nickname given in the theatre, on account of a great coat with capes which *he wore*.

an appearance; at all events he could not make things worse than they were. The directors sent for him to consult upon the opening part. He chose Shylock, they Richard; a long discussion ensued, but Kean would not give way. 'Shylock or nothing' was his dictum. And so, but very reluctantly, they were compelled to consent.

On January 26, 1814, the playbills announced that Mr. Kean, a gentleman from the Theatre Royal, Exeter, would make his first appearance as Shylock in Shakespeare's play of the 'Merchant of Venice.' No 'gag,' no puffing paragraph heralded the appearance of this new star; no adventitious aid of any kind was employed to help him to success; all was to depend upon himself—upon his own sheer ability.

Until the morning of the eventful night no regular rehearsal was vouchsafed him; the actors were civil but freezing, and as they watched him from the wings he heard more than once the comforting remark, 'He will be sure to fail.' At the end of one of the scenes Raymond, the stage manager, pronounced that it would never do—it was an innovation the public would not tolerate. But the indomitable pluck of the little man was not to be subdued; he would have it his way and no other. That day he resolved to dine! By some means his wife contrived to procure him a steak and a pint of porter; to him it was a feast of Apicius. 'My God!' he exclaimed, 'if I succeed I shall go mad!' Tying up a wig, a collar, and an old pair of black-silk stockings in a handkerchief, he thrust them into his pocket, and at six o'clock sallied forth to the theatre. The night was bitterly cold, the snow lay two feet deep upon the ground; no weather could be more unfavourable. The house was very thin, but fortunately there were one or two good critics present. From his first entrance he arrested the attention of his audience, and his 'Hath not a Jew eyes?' given forth with terrible energy, brought down a splendid round of applause. But it was in the scene with Tubal that he produced his great effect, and drew forth burst after burst of approbation. The actors grew wondrous civil: Raymond offered him oranges; Arnold, the acting manager, who had been snubbing him for three months, brought him negus. The culmination of his triumph, however, was reserved for the trial scene; his fiendish exultation when he found that the law awarded his bond; his savage whetting of the knife; the collapse and terror of the reaction when forbidden to shed 'one jot of blood;' the sordid abjectness with which he appealed for 'his principal;' the withering look of scorn with which he received the taunts of Gratiano, and which scarcely hid his crushed heart, roused the spectators to ungovernable enthusiasm, and brought

down tumults of applause. As he was going to his dressing-room two actors, Pope and Powell, met him. 'You have made a hit,' said the one. 'You have saved the theatre,' was the more emphatic dictum of the other.

The anxiety of the wife at home may be imagined. During the evening, two friends came out between the acts and ran round to the poor lodgings to tell her that all was going wonderfully; and when all was over, the actor tore off his clothes, rushed home eager, breathless, wild with the excitement of his wonderful success. 'Marý, you shall ride in your carriage yet! Charles, you shall go to Eton!' were his greeting words.

Richard, his next part, was a still greater triumph. Such use of eye, lip, and muscle had not been seen since Garrick. 'Who,' writes Fanny Kemble, 'that ever saw will forget the fascination of his dying eyes in Richard; when deprived of his sword, the wondrous power of his look seemed yet to avert the uplifted arm of Richmond.' To tell how he was sought after by the great, how nobles crowded his dressing-room, would be but to repeat the stories of Garrick and Master Betty over again. But evil association had corrupted him, and, unhappily, he enjoyed himself far more in the parlour, or even tap-room, of a public-house than in the drawing-room. As an instance, after dining with Byron, he left early to take the chair at a pugilistic supper!

At the end of seventy nights, the management had cleared 17,000*l.*

One of his benefits realised 1,150*l.*; and the morning afterwards, a friend looking in found young Charles sitting on the floor playing with a pile of guineas, and bank-notes lying in little heaps on mantelpiece, table, sofa, everywhere. What a contrast! But not greater than the following. During his strolling days he had played at a tavern in Dumfries to one sixpenny spectator; a few years after he received at Edinburgh one hundred guineas a night!

These are pleasant contrasts; of a far different nature are those which follow. Grattan thus describes his appearance in the last original character he performed, Ben Nazir: 'He spoke, but what a speech! The one I had written consisted of eight or nine lines; his was of two or three *sentences*, but not six consecutive words of the text. His look, his manner, his tone were to me quite appalling; to any other observer they must have been incomprehensible. He stood fixed, drawled out his incoherent words, and gave the notion of a man who had been dragged through a horse-pond. . . . He went through it like a man in the last stage of exhaustion and decay. The act closed, a dead silence followed the fall of the curtain.' In his old characters, however, he had not yet lost his

magic. But what a behind-the-scenes picture does the following extract present: 'From the front no trace of weakness could be discovered, but at the wings he was a mere helpless mass, bent up in a chair, only sustained by brandy-and-water. But when the call was made, he looked about him as one in a dream, swayed, struggled to his feet like a column in an earthquake, and in not more time than is required for the telling of it was before the audience as strong and as intellectually beautiful as of old, but happy only in the applause which gave him a little breathing-space and saved him from falling dead upon the stage.'

All was over; his fame had driven him mad, and so he abused his fortune, outraged society, and became the victim of excess and the remorse which followed.

Last scene of all. On March 25, 1833, he appeared at Drury Lane as Othello to the Iago of his son Charles, now also, sorely against his father's will, become an actor. The house was crammed, the excitement prodigious. The great actor, now in the last stage of decay, struggled through the part until he came to the 'Farewell;' but as his lips pronounced the terribly significant words, 'Othello's occupation's gone!' he fell upon his son's shoulder, whispering, 'I am dying; speak to them for me.' The curtain fell—never to rise again upon Edmund Kean.

The only successes which at all approach to these great four in our own days, were those of Gustavus Brooke and of Frederick Robson; and both, unhappily, had a somewhat similar ending. There were many points of resemblance between the latter and the elder Kean: the intoxication of greatness destroyed both; while in genius the wonderful burlesque actor approached nearest to the wonderful tragedian of any this generation has seen or is likely to see.

GOOD STORIES OF MAN AND OTHER ANIMALS.

BY CHARLES READE.

10. *The Tilt.*

A YARN.

PART II.

YOUTH, a good constitution, good nursing, the right food and drink, and no medicine, saved the life of Arthur Greaves. But gastric fever and jaundice are terrible foes to attack a man in concert; they left him as unlike the tanned and ruddy seaman of our first scene, as the wrecked ship battered against the shore is to the same vessel when she breasted the waves under canvas. His hair was but half an inch long, his grizzly beard two inches; and his sunken cheeks as yellow as saffron. They told him he was out of danger, and offered him a barber, to shave his chin; the same that had shaved his head, a fortnight before.

‘No,’ said the convalescent; ‘not such a fool.’

He explained to his uncle, in private, ‘I have lost my Ellen for want of a beard. I won’t lose another that way, if I ever have one.’

He turned his now benumbed heart towards his profession; and pined for blue water. His physician approved; and so, though still weakish and yellowish, he shipped, as passenger, in the ‘Phœbe,’ bound for Bombay and China; and went on board at Gravesend. She was registered nine hundred tons; and carried out a mixed cargo of hardware and Manchester goods, including flaming cottons got up only for the East, where Englishmen admire them for their Oriental colour. . . . She was well manned at starting, and ably commanded from first to last by Captain Curtis and six officers. The first mate, Mr. Lewis, was a very experienced seaman, and quite a friendship sprang up between him and flag-lieutenant Greaves. The second mate, Castor, was an amiable dare-devil; but had much to learn in navigation, though in mere seamanship he was well enough. Fortunately, he knew his deficiencies, and was teachable.

A prosperous voyage is an uneventful one; and there never was a more humdrum voyage than the ‘Phœbe’s,’ from Gravesend to Bombay. She was towed from Gravesend to Deal, where an

easterly wind sprang up, and, increasing, carried her past the 'Lizard,' and out of sight of land; soon after that the wind veered a point or two to the northward. She sighted Madeira on the seventh day, and got the N.E. Trades; they carried her two degrees north of the line. Between that and 2 S. she fell into the Doldrums. But she got the S.E. Trade sooner than usual, and made the best of it; set the foretop-mast studding sail, and went a little out of her course. At 34 S. she got into the steady norwester, and, in due course, anchored in Table Bay.

The diamond fever being at its height, several hands deserted her at the Cape. But she had fair weather, and reached Bombay without any incident worth recording. By this time Greaves had put on flesh and colour, and, though his heart had a scar that often smarted, it bled no longer, and, as to his appearance, he was himself again, all but a long and very handsome beard.

At Bombay the 'Phœbe' landed part of her cargo, and all her passengers; but took a few fresh ones on board, for China; a Portuguese merchant bound for Macao, and four ladies, two of them officers' wives returning to their husbands, and two spinsters going out to join their relatives at Hong Kong. They were all more or less pretty and intelligent, and brightened the ship amazingly; yet one day every man in her wished, with all his soul, every one of those ladies was out of her. She also shipped forty Lascars, to make up for twenty white men she had lost by death and desertion.

The 'Phœbe' had fair weather to Penang, and for some time after, but not enough of it. However, after the usual bother in the Straits of Malacca, she got clear, and carried a light breeze with her. Captain Curtis feared it would be down sun, down wind; but the breeze held through the first, and greater part of the second, watch; and then, sure enough, it fell dead calm.

Mr. Lewis had the morning watch; the ropes were coiled up at one bell, the whip rigged, the deck wetted and sanded, and they were holystoning it, when day began to break. Then there loomed the black outline of a strange sail lying on the 'Phœbe's' port-beam, a quarter of a mile off. The sun soon gets his full power in that latitude, and in a minute the vessel burst out quite clear, a topsail schooner, of some four hundred tons, with a long snaky hull, taunt, raking masts, and black mast-heads, everything very trig, alow and aloft, sails extremely white; she carried five guns of large calibre on each side.

Lewis reported her to the Captain directly, and he came on deck. They both examined her with their glasses. She puzzled them.

'What do you make of her, Lewis? Looks like a Yankee.'

‘So I thought, sir, till I saw her armament.’

Here Greaves joined them, and the Captain turned towards him.
‘Can she be one of your China Squadron?’

‘Hardly, unless the Admiral has a schooner for his tender; and, if so, she would be under a pennant.’

Lewis suggested she might be a Portuguese schooner, looking out for pirates.

Captain Curtis said she might; and he should like to know; so he ordered the driver to be brailled up, and the ship’s colours hoisted.

The next moment it was eight bells, and pipe to breakfast. But Captain Curtis and his companions remained on deck, to see the stranger hoist her colours in reply.

The schooner did not show a rag of bunting. She sat the water, black, grim, snake-like, silent.

Her very crew were invisible; yet one glance at her rigging had showed the officers of the ‘Phœbe’ she was well manned.

Captain Curtis had his breakfast brought him on deck.

The vessels drifted nearer each other, as often happens in a dead calm. So, at 8.50 A.M., Captain Curtis took a trumpet, and hailed the stranger, ‘*Schooner—ahoy!*’

No answer.

The ‘Phœbe’s’ men tumbled up, and clustered on the fore-castle, and hung over the bulwarks; for nothing is more exciting to a ship’s company than hailing another vessel at sea.

Yet not one of the schooner’s crew appeared.

This was strange, unnatural, and even alarming.

The Captain, after waiting some time, repeated his hail still louder.

This time, a single figure showed on board the schooner; a dark, burly fellow, with a straight moustache, a little tuft on his chin, and wearing a Persian fez. He stood by the foremast swiftsure of the main rigging, and bawled through his trumpet, ‘Hullo!’

‘What schooner is that?’

‘What ship is that?’

‘The “Phœbe.”’

‘Where from, and where bound?’

‘Penang to Hong Kong. Who are you?’

‘The “Black Rover.”’

‘Where bound?’

‘Nowhere.—Cruising.’

‘Why don’t—ye—show—your colours?’

‘Ha!—ha!’

As this strange laugh rang through the trumpet across the strip of water that now parted the two vessels, the Mephistophelian figure dived below, and the schooner was once more deserted, to all appearance.

It was curious to see how Captain Curtis and his first mate now evaded their own suspicions, and were ingenious in favourable surmises. Might she not be an armed slaver? or, as Lewis had suggested, a Portuguese?

‘That fellow who answered the hail had the cut of a Portuguese.’

But here Mr. Castor put in his word. ‘If she is looking for pirates, she hasn’t far to go for one, I’m thinking,’ said that hare-brained young man.

‘Nonsense, sir,’ said the Captain. ‘What do you know about pirates? Did ye ever see one as near as this?’

‘No, sir.’

‘No more did I,’ said Greaves.

‘*You!*’ said Castor. ‘Not likely. When they see a Queen’s ship they are all wings, and no beak. But they can range up alongside a poor devil of a merchantman. Not seen a pirate? no; they are rare birds now; but I have seen ships of burden, and ships of war, and this is neither. She is low in the water, yet she carries no freight, for she floats like a cork. She is armed, and well manned, yet no crew to be seen. The devils are under hatches, till the time comes. If she isn’t a pirate, what is she? However, I’ll soon know.’

‘Don’t talk so wild, Castor,’ said the Captain: ‘and how can you know? they won’t answer straight, and they won’t show their colours.’

‘Oh, there’s a simple way you have not thought of,’ said the sapient Castor: ‘and I’ll take that way, if you will allow me—I’LL BOARD HER.’

At this characteristic proposal, made with perfect composure, the others looked at him with a certain ironical admiration.

‘Board her!’ said the Captain. ‘I’ll be d——d if you do.’

‘Why not, Captain? There, that shows you think she is wicked. Why, we *must* find out what she is—somehow.’

‘We shall know soon enough,’ said the Captain, gloomily. ‘I am not going to risk my officers; if anybody boards her, it shall be me.’

‘Oh, that is the game, is it?’ said Castor, reproachfully. ‘Why, Captain, you are a married man. You ought to be ashamed of yourself.’

‘No more words, sir, if you please,’ said the Captain, sternly.

'Step forward, and give the order to sling a butt, and get a boat ready for target practice. I shall exercise the guns, being a calm. Perhaps he thinks we are weaker than we are.'

As soon as Castor's back was turned, he altered his tone, and said, with much feeling, 'I know that fool-hardy young man's mother. How could I look her in the face, if I let him board that devil before we know her intentions?'

A butt was ballasted with sand, so as to secure its floating steadily, bung-hole up; the bung was removed, and a boat-hook wedged in, bearing the ensign. The butt was then launched, and towed out half a mile to starboard; and the 'Phoebe' tried her guns on it.

If she had anticipated this meeting, the ship could have poured a formidable broadside into the mysterious stranger; for she carried three 32 lbs. carronades of a side on her quarter-deck, and 13 eighteen pounders of a side on her gun-deck. But it was the old story; the times were peaceable, the men were berthed on the gun-deck, and, for their convenience, eighteen out of the twenty-six guns had been struck down into the hold.

With the remaining guns on the starboard side they fired at the butt, and so carefully that, after an hour's practice, it was brought back very little the worse. The only telling shot was made on the gun-deck by a gunner, whose foot slipped somehow, and he dropped a thirty-two pound ball on Greaves's ankle, disabling that unfortunate officer; he was carried to his cabin, in great pain, and there attended by the surgeon.

The commotion caused by this misfortune was hardly over upon the quarter-deck, when an unexpected incident occurred, an act of direct insubordination. Mr. Castor had put on his uniform, and persuaded two poor fellows, an ignorant Lascar, and a reckless Briton like himself, to go out in the boat to the schooner. They slipped into her as soon as the party came on board with the butt, and at first pretended to be baling her out, and examining her for leaks; but they worked quietly alongside till they got under the ship's bows, and then dropped their oars gently into the water, and pulled for the schooner, like mad.

They were a third of the way before Captain Curtis caught sight of them. He roared to them to come back, and threatened to put them in irons. But none are so deaf as those who won't hear; and he did not use his trumpet, lest the enemy should think they were disunited on board the ship.

He and Lewis, therefore, now looked on in silence, and literally perspired with anxiety for the fate of Castor and his boat's crew; and, although their immediate anxiety was as unselfish as it was

keen, yet they were also conscious that, if Castor lost his life in this rash enterprise, that would prove the commander of the schooner felt strong enough to attack *them*—no quarter on either side—and intended to do it.

At this terrible moment, when their eyes were strained to observe every movement in the schooner, and their nerves strung up like violin strings, female voices broke gaily in upon them with innocent chatter that, for once, jarred as badly as screams; the lady passengers had kept very snug during the firing, but finding it was quite over, burst on the deck in a body.

1st lady.—‘Oh, that’s the ship we have been saluting.’

2nd lady.—‘A royal salute.’

3rd lady.—‘Is it the Duke of Edinburgh’s ship, Captain?’

No answer.

3rd lady.—‘What a beauty!’

1st lady.—‘Why does she not salute us back, Captain?’

Captain.—‘Got no guns, perhaps.’

1st lady.—‘Oh yes, she has. Those black things peeping out are guns.’

2nd lady.—‘Ah, there’s one of our boats going to call on her.’

3rd lady.—‘Oh, Captain, may we go on board of her?’

Captain.—‘No, ma’am.’

3rd lady.—‘Oh, dear. Why not?’

Captain.—‘That is my business.’

The fair speaker tossed her head, and said, ‘Well, I am sure!’ but she drew back with red cheeks, and the tears in her eyes, at being snubbed so suddenly and unreasonably: the other ladies gathered round her, and the words, ‘Cross old thing!’ were heard to issue from the party, but fell unheeded, for neither the Captain nor Mr. Lewis had eyes nor ears except for the schooner and the boat. As the latter neared the ship, several faces peeped, for a moment, from the port-holes of the schooner.

Yet, when the boat ran alongside the schooner amidships, there was no respect shown to Castor’s uniform, nor, indeed, common civility: it would have been no more than the right thing to pipe the side; but there were no sidesmen at all, nor even a side-rope.

Observing this, Captain Curtis shook his head very gravely.

But the dare-devil Castor climbed the schooner’s side like a cat, and boarded her in a moment, then gave his men an order, and disappeared. The men pulled rapidly away from the schooner; and a snarl of contempt and horror broke from Curtis and his first mate. They seemed to be abandoning their imprudent, but gallant officer.

They pulled about a hundred yards, and then rested on their oars, and waited.

Then every sailor on board the 'Phœbe' saw, instinctively, that Castor felt his danger, and had declined to risk any life but his own. He must have ordered the men to lie to a certain time, then give him up for lost, and return in safety to the ship. This trait, and his daring, made Castor, in one single moment, the darling of the whole ship's company.

The ladies were requested to go below, on some pretence or other; and the ship was cleared for action, as far as possible.

Meantime words can hardly describe the racking suspense that was endured by the officers, and, in a great degree, by the crew of the 'Phœbe.' The whole living heart of that wooden structure throbbed for one man.

Five minutes passed,—ten,—twenty,—thirty,—yet he did not reappear.

Apprehension succeeded to doubt, and despair to apprehension.

At last they gave him up, and the burning desire for vengeance mingled with their fears for their own safety. So strong was this feeling, that the next event, the pirate's attack upon that ill-fated officer's ship, was no longer regarded with unmixed dread. The thirst for vengeance mingled with it.

At ten o'clock A.M. the strained eyes on board the 'Phœbe' saw two sidesmen appear amidships, and fix scarlet side-ropes.

Then came an officer, and hailed Castor's boat. The men pulled to the schooner. Then Castor appeared, and went down by the ropes into the boat; he and the officer touched hats. Castor sat down in the stern-sheets, and the men gave way.

The ship's company cheered, the side was piped, and the insubordinate officer received on board with all the honours. Caps were waved, eyes glistened, and eager hands extended to him: but he himself did not seem so very exultant. He was pleased with his reception, however, and said, in his quaint way, 'This is jolly. I am not to be put in irons, then.'

The Captain drew him apart. 'Well, what is she?'

'Don't know.'

'Why, what do you mean? You have been near an hour aboard her.'

'But I am none the wiser. Captain, I wish you would have us all into your cabin, and then I'll tell you a rum story; perhaps you will understand it amongst you; for you know my head-piece isn't A 1.'

This advice was taken directly, and Castor related his adventures, in full conclave, with closed doors.

MR. CASTOR'S NARRATIVE.

'The beggar did not hang out so much as a rope to me. I boarded his hooker the same way I should like to board her again with thirty good cutlasses at my back; and I ordered the boat to lie out of harm's way for an hour.

'Well, I soon found myself on her quarter-deck, under the awning. By George, sir, it was alive with men, as busy as bees, making their little preparations, drat 'em. Some were oiling the locks of the guns, some were cleaning small arms, some were grinding cutlasses. They took no notice of me; and I stood there looking like an ass.

'I wondered whether they took me for a new officer just joined; but that was not likely. However, I wasn't going to notice *them*, as they hadn't the manners to notice me. So there I stood, and watched them. And I had just taken out my vesuvians to light a cigar, when a middle-aged man, in a uniform I don't know, but the metal of it was silver, came bustling up, touched his cap to the deck, and brushed past me as if I was invisible; so I hung on to his coat-tails, and brought him to under all his canvas.

This set the youngest mate giggling, but he was promptly frowned down.

"'Hullo!" says he, "What are ye about? Why, who the deuce are *you*?"

"'Second mate of the 'Phœbe,' alongside," says I.

"'Mate of the 'Phœbe,'" says he; "then what brings you on board of *us*?"

'That was rather a staggerer; but I thought a bit, and said I wanted to see the captain of the schooner.

'Well, sir, at this, some of the men left off working, and looked up at me, as if I was some strange animal.

"'Do you?" says the officer; "then you are the only man aboard that does." Then he turned more friendly like, and says, "Look here, young gentleman, don't you go to meet trouble. Wait till it comes to you. Go back to your ship, before *she* sees you."

"'She! Who?"

"'No matter. You sheer off, and leave our captain alone.'

'Now, gentlemen, I'm a good-tempered chap; and you may chaff me till all is blue; but I can't stand intimidation. If they threaten me, it puts my blood up. At school, if another boy threatened me, I never answered him; my fist used to fly at his mouth as soon as the threat was out of it.'

‘Good little boy,’ said Lewis.

But the Captain was impatient. ‘Come, sir, we don’t want your boyish reminiscences; to the point, please.’

‘Ay, ay, sir. Well, then, the moment he threatened me, I just turned my back on him, and made for the companion-ladder.’

“Avast there!” roared the officer, in an awful fright. “Nobody uses that ladder, but the captain himself and—man alive, if you *will* see him, follow me.” So he led me down the main hatchway. By the chain-cable tier I came all of a sudden on three men in irons; ugly beggars they were, and wild-looking, reckless chaps. One of them ran a spare anklet along the bar, and says to me, “Here you are; room for one more.” But my companion soon stopped his jaw. “Silence in irons, or he’ll cut your tongue out,” says he. He wouldn’t go to the captain with me; but he pointed aft, and whispered, “Last cabin but one, starboard side.” Then he sheered off, and I went for’ard, and knocked at the cabin door. No answer; so I knocked louder. No answer; so I turned the handle, and opened the door.’

‘Young madman!’ groaned the Captain.

‘Not so very. I HAD MY LITTLE PLAN.’

‘Oh, he had his little plan,’ said Curtis ironically, pityingly, paternally. Then, hotly, ‘Go on, sir; don’t keep us on tenter-hooks, like this.’

‘Well, Captain, I opened that door, and oh, my eye! it wasn’t a cabin; it was a nobleman’s drawing-room; pile carpet an inch thick; beautiful painted ceiling; so many mirrors down to the ground, and opposite each other, they made it look like a big palace. Satin-wood tables; luxurious couches and chairs; a polished brass stove; but all the door-handles silver; venetians, and rose-coloured blinds and curtains. The sun just forced its way through, and made everything pink. It was a regular paradise; but, instead of an angel, there was a great hulking chap, squatted cross-legged, on an ottoman at the further end, smoking a hookah as long and twisty as a boa-constrictor. The beggar wasn’t smoking honest tobacco, neither, but mixed with rose leaves and cinnamon shavings, and, in my opinion, a little opium, for he turned up his eyes like an owl in paradise.’

‘Not so very formidable, then.’

‘Formidable!—Well, I wouldn’t answer for that, at the proper time, and at the head of his cut-throats; for he was a precious big chap, with black brows, and a wicked-looking moustache and tuft. He was the sort of chap that nigger, who smothers his wife in the play, says he *killed*, “a malignant and a turbaned Turk,” you know. But then, it wasn’t his fighting hour; he was in smoker’s paradise,

and it's my belief you might have marched up to him, and knocked him on the head—like one of those devil-may-care penguins, that won't budge for a cannon-ball—and then he would have gone smoking on the ground till you cut his head off and took away his pipe. But you'll find the "Malignant" had a protector, worse luck, and one that didn't smoke spice, but only looked it. Well, Captain, I came up to the nearest table, and hit it pretty hard with my fist, to see if I could make that thundering picture jump.'

'What picture?'

'Why, the "Malignant and the Turbaned." Devil a bit. He took no notice. So then I bawled at the beggar—"Your most obedient, sir; I'm the second mate of the 'Phœbe,' lying alongside, and the Captain has sent me to compare longitudes."

'The "Malignant" took no notice; just glared at me, and smoked his pipe. He looked just like that "Malignant Turban" that plays whist with you by machinery in London, and fixes his stony eyes on you all the time; but, with me bawling at him, a door opened, and in came a flood of light, and, in the middle of it, oh Lord!'

'Well, what?'

'Just the loveliest woman I ever clapped eye on. The vision took me all aback, and I suppose I stared at her as hard as the "Malignant" was staring at vacancy; for she smiled at my astonishment, and made me a sort of a haughty curtsy, and waved her hand for me to sit down. Then says she, mighty civil—too civil by half—"Have I the pleasure of addressing the Captain of that beautiful ship?'

'"I'm her second officer, ma'am," says I; but I was too dazzled by her beauty to make her up any lies all in a moment.

'"Bound for China?" says she, like honey.

'"Yes, ma'am."

'"A large crew?" says she, like treacle.

'"About ninety, ma'am," says I, very short, for I began to smell a rat.

'"Many European sailors amongst them?" says she.

'"So then I saw what the beautiful fiend would be at, and I said "about fifty."

'"Indeed!" says she, smiling like Judas. "You know ladies will be curious, and I could only count twenty-five."

'"The rest were below, coiling ropes," says I.

'"So she laughed at that, and said, "But I saw plenty of Lascars."

'"Oh, our Lascars are picked men," says I.

"I wish you joy of them," she says; "we don't have them here: not to be trusted, in EMERGENCIES, you know."

"Whilst I was swallowing this last pill, she at me again. Did we often exercise our guns? I said of course we did, in a calm. "Why," said she, "that is not much use; the art is to be able to hit ships, and *things*, as you are rising, or falling, on the waves—so they *tell* me," says she, correcting herself.

"The beautiful devil made my blood run cold. She knew too much.

"What is your cargo?" says she, just as if she was our bosom friend. But I wouldn't stand any more of it. "Nutmegs," says I. So she laughed, and said, "Well, but seriously?" So then I thought chaffing her would do no good, and I told her we had landed the valuable part of our cargo at Bombay, and had only a lot of grates and fire-irons left. I put on a friendly tone, all sham, like hers, you know, and told her that tea-ships depended on the cargo they brought home, not on the odds and ends they took out just to ballast the craft.

"Well, what was the next thing?"

"Oh, I remember she touched a silver bell; and a brown girl, in loose trousers, and cocked-up shoes and a turban, came in with a gold tray, or it might be silver gilt, and a decanter of wine; and the lovely demon said, "Pour out some wine, Zulema."

"No, thank you, ma'am," said I. So she laughed, and said it wasn't poisoned. She sent off the slave, and filled two glasses, with the loveliest white hand, and such a diamond on it. She began drinking to me, and, of course, I did the same to her. "Here's to our next merry meeting," said she. My blood ran a little cold at that; but I finished my liquor. It was no use flying a white feather; so, says I, "Here's to the Corsair's bride." Her eyes twinkled, but she made me a civil curtsy.

"That's prime Madeira," says I.

"She said, yes, it had been their companion in several cruises. "It runs through a fellow like oil," says I. "Then have some more," said she. So I did, and then she did not say any more, and the "Malignant" sat mum-chance: and I was pumped dry; and quite at a loss. So—not to look like a fool—I—asked 'em to breakfast."

"What!—Who?"

"Why, the lady and gentleman: I mean the "Malignant," and "the Corsair's bride."

"Young madman!"

"Why, what harm could that do, Captain?"

"What good could it do? What did they say?"

‘She said, “Are there any ladies aboard?” I said, “Yes, and tip-top fashionable ones.” So then she looked at the “Malignant,” and he never moved a muscle. So then she said, “We will do ourselves the pleasure—IF WE ARE IN COMPANY;” and she smiled ever so knowingly, did that beautiful demon.

‘Then I pretended cheerful: “That is all right,” said I. “Mind, I shall tell the ladies, and they will be awfully disappointed if you don’t come.”

“‘I assure you,” says she, “we will come, IF WE ARE IN COMPANY. I give you my hand on it,” says she; and she put out her hand. It was lovely, and white; but I looked at it as if ’twas the devil’s claw; but I had to take it, or walk the plank; so I did take it; and, oh Lord, would you believe it? she gave mine such a squeeze.’

Lewis.—‘Gammon!’

Castor.—‘I tell you she gave my flipper the most delicious squeeze you ever—it was so long, and soft, and gentle.’

Curtis.—‘But what was it for?’

Castor.—‘At the time I thought it was to encourage me; for she said, ever so softly, “You are a brave man.” But more likely it was to delude me, and put me off my guard. Well, I was for sheering off, after that, and I made a low bow to the “Malignant;” he never got up, but he showed his little bit o’ breeding, took the snake-pipe out of his mouth, and brought his head slowly down, an inch a minute, till he looked like pitch-poling over on to the floor and cutting a somersault; and, whilst he was going down and up again, the lady said, “You had better wait a minute;” it was in a very particular way she said it; and she flew to a telegraph, and her white hands went clicking at an awful rate; and I cannot get it out of my head that if those white hands hadn’t worked those wires, I should have been cut in pieces at the cabin-door. Not that I cared so very much for that. I HAD MY LITTLE PLAN. However, she left off clicking, just as that old picture got his figure-head above his bows again; so I made my bow to ’em both, and sheered off; and blest if that elderly officer does not meet me at the door, and march before me to the quarter-deck; and there’s another officer hailing my boat; and there were fine scarlet silk side-ropes fixed, and two men standing by them. So I came away in state. But I’m no wiser than I went. Whether it is an Eastern prince, out on pleasure, or a first-class pirate, I don’t know. I hope you will order a tip-top breakfast, Captain, for the honour of the ship; lobster curry, for one thing; and sharpen cutlasses, and clean small arms; and borrow all Mr. Greaves’s revolvers; he is taking out quite a cargo of ’em: and that reminds

me I forgot to tell you what my little plan was that made me so saucy. I borrowed one of Greaves's six-shooters; here it is, and at the first sign of treachery, I wasn't going to waste powder, but just cut back and kill the "Malignant" and the Corsair's bride; for I argued they wouldn't have a successor ready, and ten to one they would have a quarrel who was to take the command; so that would save our hooker at the expense of one hand, and him a bachelor. Nobody minds a bachelor getting snuffed out.'

Upon Mr. Castor revealing his little plan, the other officers insisted on shaking hands with him. At which he stared, but consented heartily; and, finding himself in such unexpected favour, repeated his advice. 'Prepare an excellent breakfast for to-morrow, and grind cutlasses, and load the guns with grape, and get all the small arms loaded, especially revolvers; for,' said Castor, 'I *think* they mean to board us to-night, cut all our throats, ravish the women, and scuttle the craft, when they have rifled her; but, if they don't, I'm *sure* they will come to breakfast. She gave me her hand on that, and the turbaned Turk nodded his thundering old piratical figure-head.'

The other officers agreed with him that the ship would probably be attacked that night, and all possible preparations were made for her defence. They barred the ports on the main deck, charged the cannon with grape, armed the Lascars with cutlasses, and the white men with muskets as well, and the officers and the boatswain with cutlasses and revolvers.

The sun set, and all was now grim expectation and anxiety. No watch was called, for the whole crew was the watch.

The moon came out, and showed the cutter, like a black snake, lying abominably near.

Hour after hour dragged by in chill suspense. Each bell, as it was struck, rang like a solemn knell.

Midnight came, and passed. Morning approached.

The best time for attacking seemed to have passed.

Fears began to lessen; hopes to glow.

The elastic Castor began to transfer his whole anxiety to the cook and his mate, standing firm to his theory that the Corsair and his bride would come to breakfast, if they did not attack the ship that night. The Captain pooh-poohed this; and, indeed, Castor persuaded nobody but the cook. Him he so flattered about his fish-patties, and lobster-curries, &c., that he believed anything.

Day broke, and the ship's company and officers breathed freely. Some turned in. But still the schooner was closely watched by many eyes and deck-glasses, and keenly suspected.

Soon after eight bells there was a movement on board the schooner; and this was immediately reported by Mr. Castor, then in charge of the ship, to Captain Curtis. He came on deck directly.

'You are right, sir,' said he, handling his glass, 'and they are lowering a boat. He is coming. And—by Jove, they are rigging a whip. There's a lady. Mr. Castor, rig a whip on the main-yard. Bear a hand there, forward. Bosen!—attend the side. Here, sling this chair. Smart, now—they are shoving off.'

Six able oarsmen brought the Corsair and his bride, with race-horse speed, from the schooner to the ship.

But there were smart fellows on board the 'Phœbe' too. There was a shrill wind of the boatswain's pipe-call, the side was promptly manned, the chair lowered into the schooner's boat as she came alongside, and gently hoisted, with the lady in it, and she was landed on the deck of the 'Phœbe.'

She had a thick veil on.

The commander of the schooner drew up beside her, and Captain Curtis came forward, and the two commanders off hats and bowed.

The captain of the schooner was now gorgeous in a beautiful light-blue uniform, the cloth glossy as velvet, and heavy with silver, as was also his cap.

The Captain led the way to the cabin. His guests followed; the ladies were duly informed, and dropped in one after another. Then the Corsair's bride removed her veil, and revealed a truly beautiful woman, in the prime of youth, with a divine complexion, and eyes almost purple, so deep was their blue.

Captain Curtis seated this dazzling creature to his right, and, to the surprise of the company, her commander immediately seated himself on her other side. The ladies looked at each other, and smiled, as much as to say 'He is jealous; and no great wonder.' However, they talked to her across the body of her lord, and she to them, and she was a most piquant addition to the table, and full of spirit; she seemed devoted to her companion.

For all that, she had a letter in her pocket, which she intended to confide to one of those ladies she had never seen before in all her life; and she was now quietly examining their faces, and judging their voices, as she conversed with them, merely to make the best selection of a confidante she could.

The breakfast did honour to the ship, and the Corsair praised the lobster curry, and made himself very agreeable all round.

Presently one of the ladies said to Mr. Castor, 'But where is Mr. Greaves?' Castor told her he had been disabled by a shot a

lubberly gunner had dropped on his foot, and was confined to his cabin.

‘Oh dear,’ said the lady; ‘poor Mr. Greaves! How unlucky he is!’

‘Is it one of your officers?’ asked the strange lady quietly.

‘No, ma’am. He is a Queen’s officer, lieutenant of the “Centaur,” going out with us, as passenger.’

Then the lady changed colour, but said nothing, and speedily turned the conversation; but the Corsair looked black as thunder, and became rather silent all of a sudden.

The ladies rose, and invited the fair stranger to go with them.

‘Please excuse her,’ said the Corsair, in a civil but commanding tone.

She seemed indifferent.

Soon after this an officer came in, and said, joyfully, ‘Wind from the *Nor-west*.’

‘Ah!’ said the stranger; ‘then we must leave you, sir. Come on deck, dear.’

When they got on deck, the lady said, rather pettishly, ‘Wind? I feel no wind.’ Thereupon Mr. Castor pointed out to her a dark blue line, about eight miles off, on the pale blue water.

‘Oh!’ said she; ‘that is wind, is it?’

‘Yes, ma’am, and a good breeze too; it will be here in twenty minutes. Why, your boat is gone. Never mind, we will take you.’

‘By all means,’ said she, aloud; then, as she turned from him, she said in a swift whisper, ‘Sit near me in the boat; I’ve something for you.’

Now this conversation passed at the head of the companion-ladder, and Greaves heard the lady’s voice, though not the words. He started violently, huddled on his clothes, and would have hobbled on deck; but the boat was brought alongside in full view from the port window of his cabin. He heard her grate the ship’s side, and opened the window just as the lady was lowered into the boat. The chair was hoisted. The lady, with her veil down as she had come, took her seat on the stern thwart, beside her companion; Castor sitting at the helm.

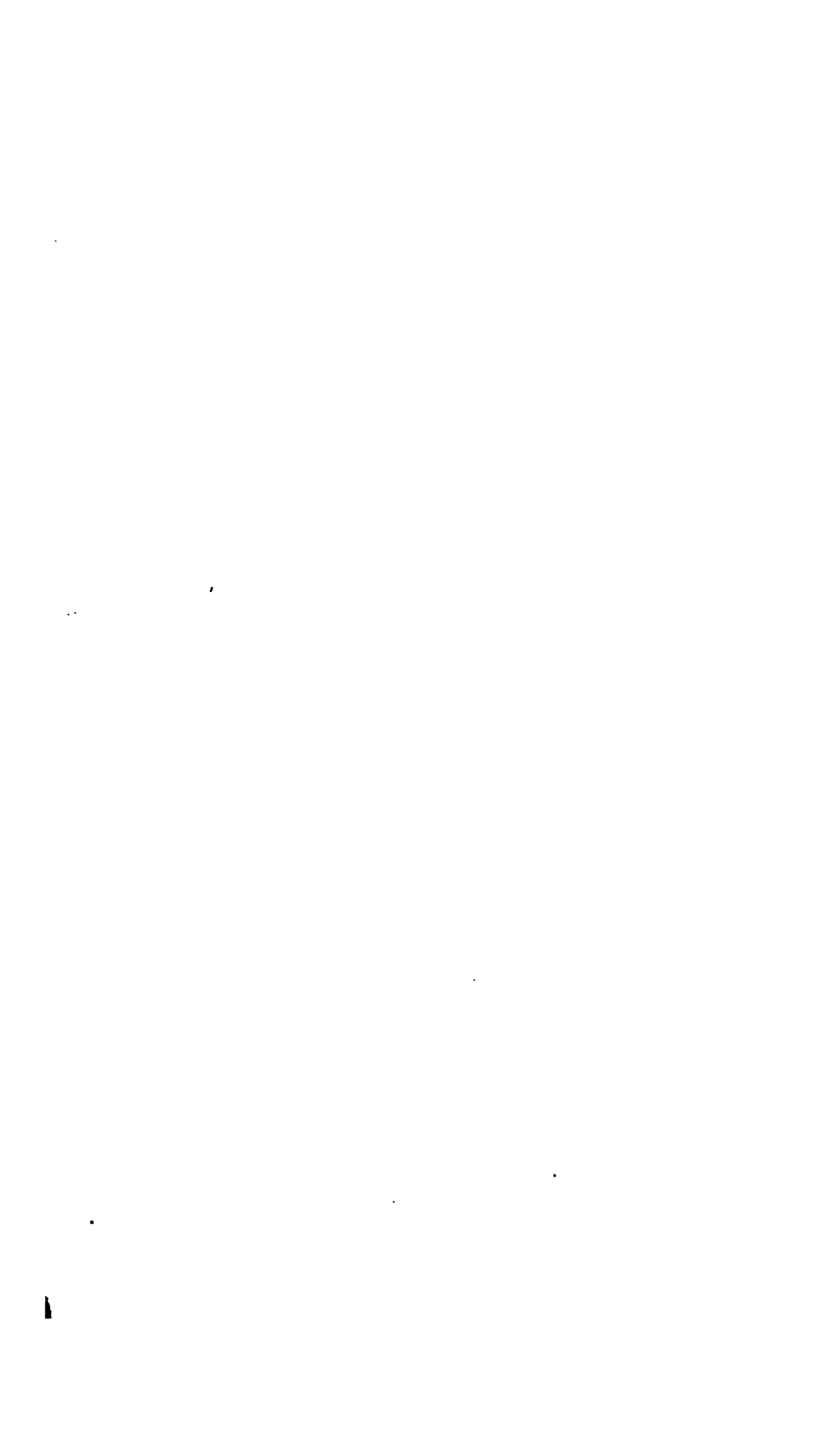
‘Shove off!’ was the word.

Then, as they turned the boat’s head round, the lady, who had seen Greaves through her veil, and had time to recognise him in spite of his beard, lifted her veil for one moment, and showed him the face of Ellen Ap Reice—that face he had loved so well, and suffered so cruelly for loving it. That face was now pale and eloquent beyond the power of words. There was self-reproach, a prayer for forgiveness, and, stranger still—a prayer to that injured friend
—FOR HELP.

(To be continued.)



THE TILT'S MUTE APPEAL TO HER UNHAPPY LOVER.



Comets as Portents.

BY RICHARD A. PROCTOR.

The blazing star,
Threat'ning the world with famine, plague, and war;
To princes death; to kingdoms many curses;
To all estates inevitable losses;
To herdsmen rot; to ploughmen hapless seasons;
To sailors storms; to cities civil treasons.

ALTHOUGH comets are no longer regarded with superstitious awe as in old times, mystery still clings to them. Astronomers can tell what path a comet is travelling upon, and say whence it has come and whither it will go, can even in many cases predict the periodic returns of a comet, can analyse the substance of these strange wanderers, and have recently discovered a singular bond of relationship between comets and those other strange visitants from the celestial depths, the shooting stars. But astronomy has hitherto proved unable to determine the origin of comets, the part they perform in the economy of the universe, their real structure, the causes of the marvellous changes of shape which they undergo as they approach the sun, rush round him, and then retreat. As Sir John Herschel has remarked: 'No one, hitherto, has been able to assign any single point in which we should be a bit better or worse off, materially speaking, if there were no such thing as a comet. Persons, even thinking persons, have busied themselves with conjectures; such as that they may serve for fuel for the sun (into which, however, they never fall), or that they may cause warm summers, which is a mere fancy, or that they may give rise to epidemics, or potato-blight, and so forth.' And though, as he justly says, 'this is all wild talking,' yet it will probably continue until astronomers have been able to master the problems respecting comets which hitherto have foiled their best efforts. The unexplained has ever been and will ever be marvellous to the general mind. Just as unexplained regions of the earth have been tenanted in imagination by

anthropophagi and men whose heads
Do grow beneath their shoulders,

so do wondrous possibilities exist in the unknown and the ill-understood phenomena of nature.

In old times, when the appearance and movements of comets

were supposed to be altogether uncontrolled by physical laws, it was natural that comets should be regarded as signs from heaven, tokens of Divine wrath towards some, and of the interposition of Divine providence in favour of others. As Seneca well remarked: 'There is no man so dull, so obtuse, so turned to earthly things, who does not direct all the powers of his mind towards things Divine when some novel phenomenon appears in the heavens. While all follows its usual course up yonder, familiarity robs the spectacle of its grandeur. For so are men made. However wonderful may be what he sees day after day, he looks on it with indifference; while matters of very little importance attract and interest him if they depart from the accustomed order. The host of heavenly constellations beneath the vault of heaven whose beauty they adorn, attract no attention; but if any unusual appearance be noticed among them, at once all eyes are turned heavenwards. The sun is only looked on with interest when he is undergoing eclipse. Men observe the moon only under like conditions . . . So thoroughly is it a part of our nature to admire the new rather than the great. The same is true of comets. When one of these fiery bodies of unusual form appears everyone is eager to know what it means; men forget other objects to inquire about the new arrival; they know not whether to wonder or to tremble; for many spread fear on all sides, drawing from the phenomenon most grave prognostics.'

There is no direct reference to comets in the Bible, either in the Old Testament or the New. It is possible that some of the signs from heaven recorded in the Bible pages were either comets or meteors, and that even where in some places an angel or messenger from God is said to have appeared and delivered a message, what really happened was that some remarkable phenomenon in the heavens was interpreted in a particular manner by the priests, and the interpretation afterwards described as the message of an angel. The image of the 'flaming sword which turned every way' may have been derived from a comet; but we can form no safe conclusion about this, any more than we can upon the question whether the 'horror of great darkness' which fell upon Abraham (Genesis xv. 12) when the sun was going down was caused by an eclipse;¹ or whether the going back of the shadow upon the dial of Ahaz

¹ A gentleman, whose acquaintance I made in returning from America last spring, assured me that he had found demonstrative evidence showing that a total eclipse of the moon then occurred; for he could prove that Abraham's vision occurred at the time of full moon, so that it could not otherwise have been dark when the sun went down (v. 17). But the horror of great darkness occurred when the sun was going down, and total eclipses of the moon do not behave that way—at least, in our time.

was caused by a mock sun. The star seen by the wise men from the east may have been a comet, since the word translated 'star' signifies any bright object seen in the heavens, and is in fact the same word which Homer, in a passage frequently referred to, uses to signify either a comet or a meteor. The way in which it appeared to go before them, when (directed by Herod, be it noticed) they went to Bethlehem, almost due south of Jerusalem, would correspond to a meridian culmination low down—for the star had manifestly not been visible in the earlier evening, since we are told that they rejoiced when they saw the star again. It was probably a comet travelling southwards; and, as the wise men had travelled from the east, it had very likely been first seen in the west as an evening star, wherefore its course was retrograde,—that is, supposing it *was* a comet.¹ It may possibly have been an apparition of Halley's comet, following a course somewhat similar to that which it followed in the year 1835, when the perihelion passage was made on November 15, and the comet running southwards disappeared to northern astronomers, though in January it was 'received' by Sir J. Herschel, to use his own expression, 'in the southern hemisphere.' There was an apparition of Halley's comet in the year 66, or seventy years after the Nativity; and the period of the comet varies, according to the perturbing influences affecting the comet's motion, from sixty-nine to eighty years.

Homer does not, to the best of my recollection, refer anywhere directly to comets. Pope, indeed, who made very free with Homer's references to the heavenly bodies,² introduces a comet—and a red one, too!—into the simile of the heavenly portent in Book IV. :—

As the red comet from Saturnius sent
To fright the nations with a dire portent,

¹ It is not easy to understand what else it could have been. The notion that a conjunction of three planets, which nearly took place about the time of Christ's birth, gave rise to the tradition of the star in the east, though propounded by a former president of the Astronomical Society, could hardly be entertained by an astronomer, unless he entirely rejected Matthew's account, which the author of this theory (the Rev. Charles Pritchard), being a clergyman, can scarcely have done.

² As, for instance, when he makes Homer say of the moon that

Around her throne the vivid planets roll,
And stars unnumbered gild the glowing pole.

It is difficult, indeed, to understand how so thorough an astronomer as the late Admiral Smyth could have called the passage in which these lines occur one of the finest bursts of poetry in our language, except on the principle wittily cited by Waller when Charles II. upbraided him for the warmth of his panegyric on Cromwell, that 'poets succeed better with fiction than with truth.' Macaulay, though not an astronomer, speaks more justly of the passage in saying that this single passage contains more inaccuracies than can be found in all Wordsworth's 'Excursion.'

(A fatal sign to armies in the plain,
Or trembling sailors on the wintry main),
With sweeping glories glides along in air,
And shakes the sparkles from its blazing hair:
Between two armies thus, in open sight,
Shot the bright goddess in a trail of light.

But Homer says nothing of this comet. If Homer had introduced a comet, we may be sure it would not have shaken sparkles from its blazing tail. Homer said simply that 'Pallas rushed from the peaks of heaven, like the bright star sent by the son of crafty-counselled Kronus (as a sign either to sailors, or the broad array of the nations), from which many sparks proceed.' Strangely enough, Pingré and Lalande, the former noted for his researches into ancient comets, the latter a skilful astronomer, agree in considering that Homer really referred to a comet, and they even regard this comet as an apparition of the comet of 1680. They cite in support of this opinion the portent which followed the prayer of Anchises, 'Æneid,' Book II. 692, &c.: 'Scarce had the old man ceased from praying, when a peal of thunder was heard on the left, and a star, gliding from the heavens amid the darkness, rushed through space followed by a long train of light; we saw the star,' says Æneas, 'suspended for a moment above the roof, brighten our home with its fires, then, tracing out a brilliant course, disappear in the forests of Ida; then a long train of flame illuminated us, and the place around reeked with the smell of sulphur. Overcome by these startling portents, my father arose, invoked the gods, and worshipped the holy star.' It is impossible to recognise here the description of a comet. The noise, the trail of light, the visible motion, the smell of sulphur, all correspond with the fall of a bolide close by; and doubtless Virgil simply introduced into the narrative the circumstances of some such phenomenon which had been witnessed in his own time. To base on such a point the theory that the comet of 1680 was visible at the time of the fall of Troy, the date of which is unknown, is venturesome in the extreme. True, the period calculated for the comet of 1680, when Pingré and Lalande agreed in this unhappy guess, was 575 years; and if we multiply this period by five we obtain 2875 years, taking 1680 from which leaves 1195 years B.C., near enough to the supposed date of the capture of Troy. Unfortunately, Encke (the eminent astronomer to whom we owe that determination of the sun's distance which for nearly half a century held its place in our books, but has within the last twenty years been replaced by a distance three millions of miles less) went over afresh the calculations of the motions of that famous comet, and found that

instead of 575 years the most probable period is about 8814 years. The difference amounts only to 8239 years; but even this small difference rather impairs the theory of Lalande and Pingré.¹

Three hundred and seventy-one years before the Christian era, a comet appeared which Aristotle (who was a boy at the time) has described. Diodorus Siculus writes thus respecting it: 'In the first year of the 102nd Olympiad, Alcisthenes being Archon of Athens, several prodigies announced the approaching humiliation of the Lacedæmonians; a blazing torch of extraordinary size, which was compared to a flaming beam, was seen during several nights.' Guillemin, from whose interesting work on Comets I have translated the above passage, remarks that this same comet was regarded by the ancients as having not merely presaged but produced the earthquakes which caused the towns of Helice and Bura to be submerged. This was clearly in the thoughts of Seneca when he said of this comet that as soon as it appeared it brought about the submergence of Bura and Helice.

In those times, however, comets were not regarded solely as signs of disaster. As the misfortunes of one nation were commonly held to be of advantage to other nations, so the same comet might be regarded very differently by different nations or different rulers. Thus the comet of the year 344 B.C. was regarded by Timoleon of Corinth as presaging the success of his expedition against Corinth. 'The gods announced,' said Diodorus Siculus, 'by a remarkable portent, his success and future greatness; a blazing torch appeared in the heavens at night, and went before the fleet of Timoleon until he arrived in Sicily.' The comets of the years 134 B.C. and 118 B.C. were not regarded as portents of death, but as signalling, the former the birth, the latter the accession, of Mithridates. The comet of 43 B.C. was held by some to be the soul of Julius Cæsar on its way to the abode of the gods. Bodin, a French lawyer of the sixteenth century, regarded this as the usual significance of

¹ It may be necessary to throw in here a few words of explanation, lest the non-astronomical reader should run away with the idea that the so-called exact science is a very inexact science indeed, so far as comets are concerned. The comet of 1680 was one of those which travel on a very eccentric orbit. Coming, indeed, from out depths many times more remote than the path even of the remotest planet, Neptune, this comet approached nearer to the sun than any which astronomers have ever seen, except only the comet of 1843. When at its nearest its nucleus was only a sixth part of the sun's diameter from his surface. Thus the part of the comet's orbit along which astronomers trace its motion was only a small part at one end of an enormously long oval, and very slight errors of observation were sufficient to produce very large errors in the determination of the nature of the comet's orbit. Encke admitted that the period might, so far as the comparatively imperfect observations made in 1680 were concerned, be any whatever, from 805 years to many millions of years, or even to infinity—that is, the comet might have a path not re-entering into itself, but carrying the comet for ever away from the sun after its one visit to our system.

comets. He was, indeed, sufficiently modest to attribute the opinion to Democritus, but the whole credit of the discovery belonged to himself. He maintained that comets only indicate approaching misfortunes because they are the spirits or souls of illustrious men, who for many years have acted the part of guardian angels, and, being at last ready to die, celebrate their last triumph by voyaging to the firmament as flaming stars. 'Naturally,' he says, 'the appearance of a comet is followed by plague, pestilence, and civil war; for the nations are deprived of the guidance of their worthy rulers, who, while they were alive, gave all their efforts to prevent intestine disorders.' Pingré comments justly on this, saying that 'it must be classed among base and shameful flatteries, not among philosophic opinions.'

Usually, however, it must be admitted that the ancients, like the men of the middle ages, regarded comets as harbingers of evil. 'A fearful star is the comet,' says Pliny, 'and not easily appeased, as appeared in the late civil troubles when Octavius was consul; a second time by the intestine war of Pompey and Cæsar; and, in our own time, when, Claudius Cæsar having been poisoned, the empire was left to Domitian, in whose reign there appeared a blazing comet.' Lucan tells us of the second event here referred to, that during the war 'the darkest nights were lit up by unknown stars' (a rather singular way of saying that there were no dark nights); 'the heavens appeared on fire, flaming torches traversed in all directions the depths of space; a comet, that fearful star which overthrows the powers of the earth, showed its horrid hair.' Seneca also expressed the opinion that some comets portend mischief: 'Some comets,' he said, 'are very cruel and portend the worst misfortunes; they bring with them and leave behind them the seeds of blood and slaughter.'

It was held, indeed, by many in those times a subject for reproach that some were too hard of heart to believe when these signs were sent. It was a point of religious faith that 'God worketh' these 'signs and wonders in heaven.' When troubles were about to befall men, 'nation rising against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, with great earthquakes in divers places, and famines, and pestilences, and fearful sights,' then 'great signs shall there be from heaven.' Says Josephus, commenting on the obstinacy of the Jews in such matters, 'when they were at any time premonished from the lips of truth itself, by prodigies and other premonitory signs of their approaching ruin, they had neither eyes nor ears nor understanding to make a right use of them, but passed them over without heeding or so much as thinking of them; as, for example, what shall we say of the comet in the form of a

sword that hung over Jerusalem for a whole year together?' This was probably the comet described by Dion Cassius (*Hist. Roman.* lxx. 8) as having been visible between the months of April and December in the year 69 A.D. This or the comet of 66 A.D. might have been Halley's comet. The account of Josephus as to the time during which it was visible would not apply to Halley's, or, indeed, to any known comet whatever; doubtless he exaggerated. He says: 'The comet was of the kind called *Xiphias*, because their tail resembles the blade of a sword,' and this would apply fairly well to Halley's comet as seen in 1682, 1759, and 1835; though it is to be remembered that comets vary very much even at successive apparitions, and it would be quite unsafe to judge from the appearance of a comet seen eighteen centuries ago that it either was or was not the same as some comet now known to be periodic.

The comet of 79 A.D. is interesting as having given rise to a happy retort from Vespasian, whose death the comet was held to portend. Seeing some of his courtiers whispering about the comet, 'That hairy star,' he said, 'does not portend evil to me. It menaces rather the king of the Parthians. He is a hairy man, but I am bald.'

Anna Comnena goes even beyond Josephus. He only rebuked other men for not believing so strongly as he did himself in the significance of comets—a rebuke little needed, indeed, if we can judge from what history tells us of the terrors excited by comets. But the judicious daughter of Alexius was good enough to approve of the wisdom which provided these portents. Speaking of a remarkable comet which appeared before the irruption of the Gauls into the Roman empire, she says: 'This happened by the usual administration of Providence in such cases; for it is not fit that so great and strange an alteration of things as was brought to pass by that irruption of theirs should be without some previous denunciation and admonishment from heaven.'

Socrates, the historian (b. 6, c. 6), says that when Gainas besieged Constantinople, 'so great was the danger which hung over the city, that it was presignified and portended by a huge blazing comet which reached from heaven to the earth, the like whereof no man had ever seen before.' And Cedrenus, in his 'Compendium of History,' states that a comet appeared before the death of Johannes Tzimicas, the emperor of the East, which foreshadowed not alone his death but the great calamities which were to befall the Roman empire by reason of their civil wars. In like manner, the comet of 451 announced the death of Attila, that of 455 the death of Valentinian. The death of Merovingius was announced by the comet of 577, of Chilperic by that of 584,

of the Emperor Maurice by that of 602, of Mahomet by that of 632, of Louis the Debonair by that of 837, and of the Emperor Louis II. by that of 837. Nay, so confidently did men believe that comets indicated the approaching death of great men, that they did not believe a very great man *could* die without a comet. So they inferred that the death of a very great man indicated the arrival of a comet; and if the comet chanced not to be visible, so much the worse—not for the theory, but—for the comet. ‘A comet of this kind,’ says Pingré, ‘was that of the year 814, presaging the death of Charlemagne.’ So Guillemin quotes Pingré; but he should rather have said, such was the comet whose arrival was announced by Charlemagne’s death—and in no other way, for it was not seen by mortal man.

The reader who chances to be strong as to his dates may have observed that some of the dates above mentioned for comets do not accord exactly with the dates of the events associated with those comets. Thus Louis the Debonair did not die in 837, but in 840. This, however, is a matter of very little importance. If some men, after their comet has called for them, are ‘an unconscionable time in dying,’ as Charles II. said of himself, it surely must not be considered the fault of the comet. Louis himself regarded the comet of 837 as his death-warrant. The astrologers admitted as much, and what more could be desired? The account of the matter given in a chronicle of the time by a writer who called himself ‘The Astronomer,’ is curious enough: ‘During the holy season of Easter, a phenomenon ever fatal and of gloomy foreboding appeared in the heavens. As soon as the emperor, who paid attention to such phenomena, received the first announcement of it, he gave himself no rest until he had called a certain learned man and myself before him. As soon as I arrived, he anxiously asked me what I thought of such a sign. I asked time of him, in order to consider the aspect of the stars, and to discover the truth by their means, promising to acquaint him on the morrow; but the emperor, persuaded that I wished to gain time, which was true, in order not to be obliged to announce anything fatal to him, said to me: “Go on the terrace of the palace, and return at once to tell me what you have seen, for I did not see this star last evening, and you did not point it out to me; but I know that it is a comet; tell me what you think it announces to me.” Then, scarcely allowing me time to say a word, he added: “There is still another thing you keep back: it is that a change of reign and the death of a prince are announced by this sign.” And as I advanced the testimony of the prophet, who said: “Fear not the signs of the heavens as the nations fear them,” the prince with his grand nature, and the wisdom which

never forsook him, said : " We must only fear Him who has created both us and this star. But, as this phenomenon may refer to us, let us acknowledge it as a warning from heaven." Accordingly, Louis himself and all his court fasted and prayed, and he built churches and monasteries. But all was of no avail. In little more than three years he died ; showing, as the historian Raoul Glaber remarked, that ' these phenomena of the universe are never presented to man without surely announcing some wonderful and terrible event.' With a range of three years in advance, and so many kings and princes as there were about in those days, and are still, it would be rather difficult for a comet to appear without announcing some such wonderful and terrible event as a royal death.

The year 1000 A.D. was by all but common consent regarded as the date assigned for the end of the world. For a thousand years Satan had been chained, and now he was to be loosened for a while. So that when a comet made its appearance, and, terrible to relate, continued visible for nine days, the phenomenon was regarded as something more than a nine days' wonder. Besides the comet, a very wonderful meteor was seen. ' The heavens opened, and a kind of flaming torch fell upon the earth, leaving behind a long track of light like the path of a flash of lightning. Its brightness was so great that it frightened not only those who were in the fields, but even those who were in their houses. As this opening in the sky slowly closed, men saw with horror the figure of a dragon, whose feet were blue, and whose head ' [like that of Dickens's dwarf] ' seemed to grow larger and larger.' A picture of this dreadful meteor accompanies the account given by the old chronicler. For fear the exact likeness of the dragon might not be recognised (and, indeed, to see it one must ' make believe a good deal '), there is placed beside it a picture of a dragon to correspond, which picture is in turn labelled ' *Serpens cum ceruleis pedibus.*' It was considered very wicked in the year 1000 to doubt that the end of the world was close at hand. But somehow the world escaped that time.

In the year 1066, Halley's comet appeared to announce to the Saxons the approaching conquest of England by William the Norman. A contemporary poet made a singular remark, which may have some profound poetical meaning, but certainly seems a little indistinct on the surface. He said that ' the comet had been more favourable to William than nature had been to Cæsar ; the latter had no hair, but William had received some from the comet.' This is the only instance, so far as I know, in which a comet has been regarded as a persequer. A monk of Malmesbury spoke more to the purpose, according to then received ideas, in thus

apostrophising the comet: 'Here art thou again, cause of tears to many mothers! It is long since I saw thee last, but I see thee now more terrible than ever; thou threatenest my country with complete ruin.'

Halley's comet, with its inconveniently short period of about seventy-seven years, has repeatedly troubled the nations, and been regarded as a sign sent from Heaven:

Ten million cubic miles of head,
Ten billion leagues of tail,

provided for the sole purpose of warning one petty race of earth-folks against the evils likely to be brought against them by another. This comet has appeared twenty-four times since the date of its first recorded appearance, which some consider to have been 12 B.C., and others refer to a few years later. It may be interesting to quote here Balinet's description of the effects ascribed in 1455 to this comet, often the terror of nations, but the triumph of mathematicians as the first whose motions were brought into recognisable obedience to the laws of gravity.¹

'The Mussulmans, with Mahomet II. at their head, were besieging Belgrade, which was defended by Huniade, surnamed the Exterminator of the Turks. Halley's comet appeared, and the two armies were seized with equal fear. Pope Calixtus III., himself seized by the general terror, ordered public prayers, and timidly anathematised the comet and the enemies of Christianity. He established the prayer called the noon *Angelus*, the use of which is continued in all Catholic churches. The Franciscans (*Frères Mineurs*) brought 40,000 defenders to Belgrade, besieged by the conqueror of Constantinople, the destroyer of the Eastern Empire. At last the battle began; it continued two days without ceasing. A contest of two days caused 40,000 combatants to bite the dust. The Franciscans unarmed, crucifix in hand, were in the front rank, invoking the papal exorcism against the comet, and turning upon the enemy that heavenly wrath of which none in those times dared doubt.'

The great comet of 1556 has been regarded as the occasion of the Emperor Charles V.'s abdication of the imperial throne; a circumstance which seems rendered a little doubtful by the fact that he had already abdicated when the comet appeared—a mere detail, perhaps, but suggesting the possibility that cause and effect may have been interchanged by mistake, and that it was Charles's

¹ For a portion of the passages which I have quoted in this essay I am indebted to Guillemin's 'Treatise on Comets,' a useful contribution to the literature of the subject, though somewhat inadequate so far as exposition is concerned.

abdication which occasioned the appearance of the comet. According to Gemma's account, the comet was conspicuous rather from its great light than from the length of its tail or the strangeness of its appearance. 'Its head equalled Jupiter in brightness, and was equal in diameter to nearly half the apparent diameter of the moon.' It appeared about the end of February, and in March presented a terrible appearance, according to Ripamonte. 'Terrific, indeed,' says Sir J. Herschel, 'it might well have been to the mind of a prince prepared by the most abject superstition to receive its appearance as a warning of approaching death, and as specially sent, whether in anger or in mercy, to detach his thoughts from earthly things, and fix them on his eternal interests. Such was its effect on the Emperor Charles V., whose abdication is distinctly ascribed by many historians to this cause, and whose words on the occasion of his first beholding it have even been recorded—

"His ergo indicia me mea fata vocant"—

the language and the metrical form of which exclamation afford no ground for disputing its authenticity, when the habits and education of those times are fairly considered.' It is quite likely that, having already abdicated the throne, Charles regarded the comet as signalling his retirement from power—an event which he doubtless considered a great deal too important to be left without some celestial record. But the words attributed to him are in all probability apocryphal.

The comet of 1577 was remarkable for the strangeness of its aspect, which in some respects resembled that of the comet of 1858, called Donati's. It required only the terror with which such portentous objects were witnessed in the Middle Ages to transform the various streamers, curved and straight, extending from such an object, into swords and spears, and other signs of war and trouble. Doubtless, we owe to the fears of the Middle Ages the strange pictures claiming to present the actual aspect of some of the larger comets. Halley's comet did not escape. It was compared to a straight sword at one visit, to a curved scimitar in 1456, and even at its last return in 1835 there were some who recognised in the comet a resemblance to a misty head. Other comets have been compared to swords of fire, bloody crosses, flaming daggers, spears, serpents, fiery dragons, fish, and so forth. But in this respect no comet would seem to have been comparable with that of 1528, of which Andrew Paré writes as follows: 'This comet was so horrible and dreadful, and engendered such terror in the minds of men, that they died, some from fear alone, others

from illness engendered by fear. It was of immense length and blood-red colour; at its head was seen the figure of a curved arm, holding a large sword in the hand as if preparing to strike. At the point of this sword were three stars; and on either side a number of axes, knives, and swords covered with blood, amongst which were many hideous human faces with bristling beards and hair.'

Such peculiarities of shape, and also those affecting the position and movements of comets, were held to be full of meaning. As Bayle pointed out in his '*Thoughts about the Comet of 1680*,' these fancies are of great antiquity. Pliny tells us that in his time astrologers claimed to interpret the meaning of a comet's position and appearance, and that also of the direction towards which its rays pointed. They could, moreover, explain the effects produced by the fixed stars whose rays were conjoined with the comet's. If a comet resembles a flute, then musicians are aimed at; when comets are in the less dignified parts of the constellations, they presage evil to immodest persons; if the head of a comet forms an equilateral triangle or a square with fixed stars, then it is time for mathematicians and men of science to tremble. When they are in the sign of the Ram, they portend great wars and widespread mortality, the abasement of the great and the elevation of the small, besides fearful droughts in regions over which that sign predominates; in the Virgin, they imply many grievous ills to the female portion of the population; in the Scorpion, they portend a plague of reptiles, especially locusts; in the Fishes, they indicate great troubles from religious differences, besides war and pestilence. When, like the one described by Milton, they '*fire the length of Ophiuchus large*,' they show that there will be much mortality caused by poisoning.

The comet of 1680, which led Bayle to write the treatise to which reference has just been made, was one well calculated to inspire terror. Indeed, if the truth were known, that comet probably brought greater danger to the inhabitants of the earth than any other except the comet of 1843—the danger not, however, being that derived from possible collision between the earth and a comet, but that arising from the possible downfall of a large comet upon the sun, and the consequent enormous increase of the sun's heat. That, according to Newton, is the great danger men have to fear from comets; and the comet of 1680 was one which in that sense was a very dangerous one. There is no reason why a comet from outer space should not fall straight towards the sun, as at one time the comet of 1680 was supposed to be doing. All the comfort that science can give the world on that point is that

such a course for a comet is only one out of many millions of possible courses, all fully as likely; and that, therefore, the chance of a comet falling upon the sun is only as one in many millions. Still, the comet of 1680 made a very fair shot at the sun, and a very slight modification of its course by Jupiter or Saturn might have brought about the catastrophe which Newton feared. Whether, if a comet actually fell upon the sun, anything very dreadful would happen, is not so clear. Newton's ideas respecting comets were formed in ignorance of many physical facts and laws which in our day render reasoning upon the subject comparatively easy. Yet, even in our time, it is not possible to assert confidently that such fears are idle. During the solar outburst witnessed by Carrington and Hodgson in September 1859, it is supposed that the sun swallowed a large meteoric mass; and as great comets are probably followed by many such masses, it seems reasonable to infer that if such a comet fell upon the sun, his surface being pelted with such exceptionally large masses, stoned with these mighty meteoric balls, would glow all over (or nearly so) as brightly as a small spot of that surface glowed upon that occasion. Now that portion was so bright that Carrington thought 'that by some chance a ray of light had penetrated a hole in the screen attached to the object-glass by which the general image is thrown in shade, for the brilliancy was fully equal to that of direct sunlight.' Manifestly, if the whole surface of the sun, or any large portion of the surface, were caused to glow with that exceeding brilliancy, surpassing ordinary sunlight in the same degree that ordinary sunlight surpassed the shaded solar image in Carrington's observations, the result would be disastrous in the extreme for the inhabitants of that half of the earth which chanced to be in sunlight at the time; and if (as could scarcely fail to happen) the duration of that abnormal splendour were more than half a day, then the whole earth would probably be depopulated by the intense heat. The danger, as I have said, is slight—partly because there is small chance of a collision between the sun and a comet, partly because we have no certain reasons for assuming that a collision would be followed by the heating of the sun for a while to a very high temperature. Looking around at the suns which people space, and considering their history, so far as it has been made known to us, for the last two thousand years, we find small occasion for fear. Those suns seem to have been for the most part safe from any sudden or rapid accessions of heat; and if they travel thus safely in their mighty journeys through space, we may well believe that our sun also is safe. Nevertheless, there *have* been catastrophes here and there. Now one sun and now another has blazed out with a hundred times

its usual lustre, gradually losing its new fires and returning to its customary brightness; but after what destruction among those peopling its system of worlds, who shall say? Spectroscopic analysis, that powerful help to the modern astronomical inquirer, has shown in one of these cases that just such changes had taken place as we might fairly expect would follow if a mighty comet fell into the sun. If this interpretation be correct, then we are not wholly safe. Any day might bring us news of a comet sailing full upon our sun from out the depths of space. Then astronomers would perhaps have the opportunity of ascertaining the harmlessness of a collision between the ruler of our system and one of the long-tailed visitors from the Celestial Empire. Or, possibly, astronomers and the earth's inhabitants generally might find out the reverse, though the knowledge would not avail them much, seeing that the messenger who would bring it would be the King of Terrors himself.

It was well, perhaps, that Newton's discovery of the law of gravitation, and the application of this law to the comets of 1680 and 1682 (the latter our old friend Halley's comet, then properly so called as studied by him), came in time to aid in removing to some slight degree the old superstitions respecting comets. For in England many remembered the comets of the Great Plague and of the Great Fire of London. These comets came so closely upon the time of the Plague and the Fire respectively, that it was not wonderful if even the wiser sort were struck by the coincidence and could scarcely regard it as accidental. It is not easy for the student of science in these our times, when the movements of comets are as well understood as those of the most orderly planets, to place himself in the position of men in the times when no one knew on what paths comets came, or whither they retreated after they had visited our sun. Taught as men were, on the one hand, that it was wicked to question what seemed to be the teaching of the Scriptures, that changes or new appearances in the heavens were sent to warn mankind of approaching troubles, and perplexed as they were, on the other, by the absence of any real knowledge respecting comets and meteors, it was not so easy as we might imagine from our own way of viewing these matters to shake off a superstition which had ruled over men's minds for thousands of years. No sect or order in religion had been free from this superstition. Popes and priests had taught their followers to pray against the evil influences of comets and other celestial portents; Luther and Melancthon had condemned in no measured terms the rashness and impiety of those who had striven to show that the heavenly bodies and the earth move in concordance with law—those 'fools

who wish to reverse the entire science of astronomy.' A long interval had elapsed between the time when the Copernican theory was struggling for existence—when, but that more serious heresies engaged men's attention and kept religious folk by the ears, that astronomical heresy would probably have been quenched in blood—and the forging by Newton of the final link of the chain of reasoning on which modern astronomy is based; but in those times the minds of men moved more slowly than in ours. The masses still held to the old beliefs about the heavenly bodies. Defoe indeed, speaking of the terror of men at the time of the Great Plague, says that they 'were more addicted to prophecies and astrological conjurations, dreams, and old wives' tales, than ever they were before or since.' But in reality, it was only because of the great misery then prevailing that men seemed more superstitious than usual; for misery brings out the superstitions—the fetishisms, if we may so speak—which are inherent in many minds, but concealed from others in prosperous times, out of shame, or perhaps a worthier feeling. Even in our own times great national calamities would show that many superstitions exist which had been thought extinct, and we should see excited among the ill-educated that particular form of persecution which arises not from zeal for religion and not from intolerance, but from the belief that the troubles have been sent because of unbelief, and the fear that unless some expiation be made the evil will not pass away from the midst of the people. It is at such times of general affliction that minds of the meaner sort have proved 'zealous even to slaying.'

The influence of strange appearances in the heavens on even thoughtful and reasoning minds at such times of universal calamity, is well shown by Defoe's remarks on the comets of the years 1664 and 1666. 'The old women,' he says, 'and the phlegmatic, hypochondriacal part of the other sex, whom I could almost call old women too, remarked that those two comets passed directly over the city' [though that appearance must have depended on the position whence these old women, male and female, observed the comet], 'and that so very near the houses, that it was plain they imported something peculiar to the city alone; and that the comet before the Pestilence was of a faint, dull, languid colour, and its motion very heavy, solemn, and slow; but that the comet before the Fire was bright and sparkling, or, as others said, flaming and its motion swift and furious: and that accordingly one foretold a heavy judgment, slow but severe, terrible and frightful, as was the Plague; but the other foretold a stroke, sudden, swift, and fiery, as was the Conflagration. Nay, so particular some people

were, that, as they looked upon that comet preceding the Fire, they fancied that they not only saw it pass swiftly and fiercely, and could perceive the motion with their eye, but even they heard it; that it made a mighty rushing noise, fierce and terrible, though at a distance and but just perceivable. I saw both these stars, and must confess had had so much the common notion of such things in my head, that I was apt to look upon them as the forerunners and warnings of God's judgments, and especially when, the Plague having followed the first, I yet saw another of the later kind, I could not but say, God had not yet sufficiently scourged the city' [London].

The comets of 1680 and 1682, though they did not bring plagues or conflagrations immediately, yet were not supposed to have been altogether without influence. The convenient fiction, indeed, that some comets operate quickly and others slowly, made it very difficult for a comet to appear to which some evil effects could not be ascribed. If anyone can find a single date, since the records of history have been carefully kept, which was so fortunately placed that during no time following it within five years, no prince, king, emperor, or pope died, no war was begun, or ended disastrously for one side or the other engaged in it, no revolution was effected, neither plague nor pestilence occurred, neither droughts nor floods afflicted any nation, no great hurricanes, earthquakes, volcanic outbursts or other trouble was recorded, he will then have shown the bare possibility that a comet might have appeared which seemed to presage neither abrupt nor slow-moving calamities. But it is not possible to name such a date, nor even a date which was not followed within two years at the utmost by a calamity such as superstition might assign to a comet. And so closely have such calamities usually followed, that scarce a comet could appear which might not be regarded as the precursor of very quickly approaching calamity. Even if a comet had come which seemed to bring no trouble, nay, if many such comets had come, men would still have overlooked the absence of any apparent fulfilment of the predicted troubles. Henry IV. well remarked, when he was told that astrologers predicted his death because a certain comet had been observed: 'One of these days they will predict it truly, and people will remember better the single occasion when the prediction will be fulfilled than the many other occasions when it has been falsified by the event.'

The troubles connected with the comets of 1680 and 1682 were removed further from the dates of the events themselves than usual, at least so far as the English interpretation of the comets was concerned. 'The great comet in 1680,' says one, 'followed

by a lesser comet in 1682, was evidently the forerunner of all those remarkable and disastrous events that ended in the revolution of 1688. It also evidently presaged the revocation of the edict of Nantes, and the cruel persecution of the Protestants, by the French king Louis XIV., afterwards followed by those terrible wars, which with little intermission continued to ravage the finest parts of Europe for nearly twenty-four years.'

If in some respects the fears inspired by comets have been reduced by modern scientific discoveries respecting these bodies, yet in other respects the very confidence engendered by the exactness of modern astronomical computations has proved a source of terror. There is nothing more remarkable, for instance, in the whole history of cometary superstition, than the panic which spread over France in the year 1773, in consequence of a rumour that the mathematician Lalande had predicted the occurrence of a collision between a comet and the earth, and that disastrous effects would inevitably follow. The foundation of the rumour was slight enough in all conscience. It had simply been announced that Lalande would read before the Academy of Sciences a paper entitled '*Reflections on those Comets which can approach the Earth.*' That was absolutely all; yet from that one fact, not only were vague rumours of approaching cometic troubles spread abroad, but the statement was definitely made that on May 20 or 21, 1773, a comet would encounter the earth.¹ So great was the fear thus excited, that in order to calm it Lalande inserted in the '*Gazette de France*' of May 7, 1773, the following advertisement:—'*M. Lalande had not time to read his memoir upon comets which may approach the earth, and cause changes in her motions; but he would observe that it is impossible to assign the epochs of such events. The next comet whose return is expected is the one which should return in eighteen years; but it is not one of those which can hurt the earth.*'

This note had not the slightest effect in restoring peace to

¹ Something very similar happened only a few years ago, so that we cannot afford to laugh too freely at the terrors of France in 1773. It was reported during the winter of 1871-1872, that Plantamour, the Swiss astronomer, had predicted the earth's destruction by a comet on August 12, 1872. Yet there was no other foundation for this rumour than the fact that Plantamour, in a lecture upon comets and meteors, had stated that the meteors seen on August 10, 11, and 12 are bodies following in the track of a comet whose orbit passes very near to the earth's. It was very certainly known to astronomers that there could be no present danger of a collision with this comet, for the comet has a period of at least 150 years, and had last passed close to the earth's orbit (not to the earth herself, be it understood) in 1862. But it was useless to point this out. Many people insisted on believing that on August 12, 1872, the earth would come into collision, possibly disastrous, with a mighty comet, which Plantamour was said to have detected, and to have shown by a profound calculation to be rushing directly upon our unfortunate earth.

the minds of unscientific Frenchmen. M. Lalande's study was crowded with anxious persons who came to inquire about his memoir. Certain devout persons, 'as ignorant as they were imbecile,' says a contemporary journal, begged the Archbishop of Paris to appoint forty hours' prayer to avert the danger and prevent the terrible deluge. For this was the particular form most men agreed that the danger would take. That prelate was on the point, indeed, of complying with that request, and would have done so but that some members of the Academy explained to him that by so doing he would excite ridicule.

Far more effective, and, to say truth, far better-judged, was the irony of Voltaire, in his deservedly-celebrated 'Letter on the Pretended Comet.' It ran as follows:—

Grenoble, May 17, 1773.

Certain Parisians who are not philosophers, and who, if we are to believe them, will not have time to become such, have informed me that the end of the world approaches, and will occur without fail on the 20th of this present month of May. They expect, that day, a comet, which is to take our little globe from behind and reduce it to impalpable powder, according to a certain prediction of the Academy of Sciences which has not yet been made.

Nothing is more likely than this event; for James Bernouilli, in his 'Treatise upon the Comet' of 1680, predicted expressly that the famous comet of 1680 would return with terrible uproar (*fracas*) on May 19, 1719; he assured us that in truth its peruke would signify nothing mischievous, but that its tail would be an infallible sign of the wrath of heaven. If James Bernouilli mistook, it is, after all, but a matter of fifty-four years and three days.

Now, so small an error as this being regarded by all geometricians as of little moment in the immensity of ages, it is manifest that nothing can be more reasonable than to hope (*sic, espérer*) for the end of the world on the 20th of this present month of May, 1773, or in some other year. If the thing should not come to pass, 'omittance is no quittance,' (*ce qui est différé, n'est pas perdu*).

There is certainly no reason for laughing at M. Trissotin, triple idiot though he is (*tout Trissotin qu'il est*), when he says to Madame Philaminte (Molière's 'Femmes Savantes,' acte iv. scène 3),

Nous l'avons en dormant, madame, échappé belle;
Un monde près de nous a passé tout du long,
Est chu tout au travers de notre tourbillon;
Et, s'il eût en chemin rencontré notre terre,
Elle eût été brisée en morceaux comme verre.

A comet coursing along its parabolic orbit may come full tilt against our earth. But then, what will happen? Either that comet will have a force equal to that of our earth, or greater, or less. If equal, we shall do the comet as much harm as it will do us, action and reaction being equal; if greater, the comet will bear us away with it; if less, we shall bear away the comet.

This great event may occur in a thousand ways, and no one can affirm that our earth and the other planets have not experienced more than one revolution, through the mischance of encountering a comet on their path.

The Parisians will not desert their city on the 20th inst.; they will sing songs, and the play of 'The Comet and the World's End' will be performed at the *Opéra Comique*,

The last touch is as fine in its way as Sydney Smith's remark that if London were destroyed by an earthquake the surviving citizens would celebrate the event by a public dinner among the ruins. Voltaire's prediction was not fulfilled exactly to the letter, but what actually happened was even funnier than what his lively imagination had suggested. It was stated by a Parisian Professor in 1832 (as a reason why the Academy of Sciences should refute an assertion then rife to the effect that Biela's comet would encounter the earth that year) that during the cometic panic of 1773 'there were not wanting people who knew too well the art of turning to their advantage the alarm inspired by the approaching comet, and *places in Paradise were sold at a very high rate.*'¹ 'The announcement of the comet of 1832 may produce similar effects,' he said, 'unless the authority of the Academy apply a prompt remedy; and this salutary intervention is at this moment implored by many benevolent persons.'

In recent years the effects produced on the minds of men by comets have been less marked than of yore, and appear to have depended a good deal on circumstances. The comet of the year 1858 (called Donati's), for example, occasioned no special fears, at least until Napoleon III. made his famous New Year's-day speech, after which many began to think the comet had meant mischief. But the comet of 1861, though less conspicuous, occasioned more serious fears. It was held by many in Italy to presage a very great misfortune indeed, viz. the restoration of Francis II. to the throne of the Two Sicilies. Others thought that the downfall of the temporal power of the Papacy and the death of Pope Pius IX. were signified. I have not heard that any very serious consequences were expected to follow the appearance of Coggia's comet in 1874. The great heat which prevailed during parts of last summer was held by many to be connected in some way with a comet which some very unskilful telescopist constructed in his imagination out of the glare of Jupiter in the object-glass of his telescope. Another benighted person, seeing the Pleiades low down through a fog, turned them into a comet, about the same

¹ A rather amusing mistake was made by the stenographers of a New York paper in reporting the above sentence, which I happened to quote in a lecture upon Comets and Meteors. Instead of Paradise they wrote Paris. Those acquainted with Pitman's system of shorthand, the one most commonly employed by reporters, will easily understand how the mistake was made, the marks made to represent the consonants p, r, d, and s, differing little from those made to represent the consonants p, r, and a (the 'd' or 't' sound is represented, or may be represented, by simply shortening the length of the sign for the preceding consonant). The mistake led naturally to my remarking in my next lecture that I had not before known how thoroughly synonymous the words are in America, though I had heard it said that 'Good Americans, when they die, go to Paris.' I ought to have been hissed off the platform for the mildness of the joke, if joke, indeed, there was. But Americans are very good.

time. Possibly the idea was, that since comets are supposed to cause great heats, great heats may be supposed to indicate a comet somewhere; and with minds thus prepared, it was not wonderful, perhaps, that telescopic glare, or an imperfect view of our old friends the Pleiades, should have been mistaken for a vision of the heat-producing comet.

It should be a noteworthy circumstance to those who still continue to look on comets as signs of great catastrophes, that a war more remarkable in many respects than any which has ever yet been waged between two great nations—a war sudden in its operations and decisive in its effects—a war in which three armies, each larger than all the forces commanded by Napoleon I. during the campaign of 1813, were captured bodily—should have been begun and carried on to its termination without the appearance of any great comet. The civil war in America, a still more terrible calamity to that great nation than the success of Moltke's operations to the French, may be regarded by believers as presignified by the great comet of 1861. But it so chanced that the war between France and Germany occurred near the middle of one of the longest intervals recorded in astronomical annals as unmarked by a single conspicuous comet—the interval between the years 1862 and 1874.

If the progress of just ideas respecting comets has been slow, it must nevertheless be regarded as on the whole satisfactory. When we remember that it was not a mere idle fancy which had to be opposed, not mere terrors which had to be calmed, but that the idea of the significance of changes in the heavens had come to be regarded by mankind as a part of their religion, it cannot but be thought a hopeful sign that all reasoning men in our time have abandoned the idea that comets are sent to warn the inhabitants of this small earth. Obeying in their movements the same law of gravitation which guides the planets in their courses, the comets are tracked by the skilful mathematician along those remote parts of their course where even the telescope fails to keep them in view. Not only are they no longer regarded as presaging the fortunes of men on this earth, but men on this earth are able to predict the fortunes of comets. Not only is it seen that they cannot influence the fates of the earth or other planets, but we perceive that the earth and planets by their attractive energies influence, and in no unimportant degree, the fates of these visitants from outer space. Encouraging, truly, is the lesson taught us by the success of earnest study and careful inquiry in determining some at least among the laws which govern bodies once thought the wildest and most erratic creatures in the whole of God's universe.

Quips and Cranks at our Club Window.

BY AN OLD ENTHUSIAST AND A YOUNG CYNIC.

NO. XVIII.—THE HARD STRUGGLE.

I've looked on Poverty undismayed,
 His cold breath on my cheek,
 I've seen him crouching at my bed,
 When winds blew shrill and bleak.
 I've watched him crawling to my board,
 To snatch my scanty food,
 But never suffered him—no, not once—
 To scare me where I stood ;—
 But fought him, upright, like a man
 That only feared disgrace ;
 And hit him hard, and laid him low,
 And scorned him to his face !
 I've struggled—sure of victory,
 In Pride, although in pain,
 With soul serene, and head erect,
 And so I will again.

NO. XIX.—DIAMOND SCRATCHES.

FIVE years ago, in this cozy Inn,
 We passed a pleasant day,
 Four merry friends, who ate and drank,
 And were blithe as birds in May.
 We scratched our names on the window-pane ;—
 There they stand in the sheen,
 And prove to me, if to nobody else,
 What fools we must have been.

One of them borrowed my cash (a dove
 That never returned to the ark) ;
 The second was jealous of my fame,
 And stabbed it in the dark !
 The third made love to a bonnie wee maid
 Dearer to me than life,
 Wooed her and won her behind my back,
 And made her his wretched wife.

QUIPS AND CRANKS.

And here I sit in the cozy Inn,
 While the bright wood-splinters blaze,
 And drink my pint of claret alone,
 And think of the bygone days,
 And wonder which of my three false friends
 I hate or despise the most ;—
 Surely not him, who borrowed my cash ?—
 'Tis gone—'tis a bodiless ghost !

Surely not him who stole my wife ?
 That was not my wife, God wot !
 But might have been, to my dire distress,
 Had she fallen to my lot !
 I think I hate with the deadliest hate
 The fellow who slurred my name—
 Shaking my hand, eating my bread,
 And murdering my Fame !

No. XX.—NIAGARA UNVISITED.

'Twas full three hours ere the sun went down
 When the great man halted at Buffalo town.
 'We'll not stay here,' said his comrade true,
 'There's little to see, and nothing to do ;
 But we'll off, and away ! to a glory that calls,
 Only two hours to Niagara Falls !'

The great man paused, and with pompous look
 Said, 'The human heart is my only book !
 Niagara's all very well in its way,
 But I think we'll not trouble its glories to-day ;
 To-day nor to-morrow—if ever at all—
 I'll take it on trust—your magnificent Fall !'

To Niagara Falls he never went :
 What do you think the great man meant ?
 He meant to boast he had strength of mind
 To be unlike the rest of his kind ;
 Though he proved meanwhile—the proof was sad—
 He was only a great and particular cad !

No. XXI.—VANITAS VANITATUM.

What is it to be wise ?
 'Tis but to know how little can be known.—POPE.

A POOR, poor fellow, a very good fellow,
 Went maundering by the sea,
 Looking at times to the starry heaven,
 At times to the wild waves free ;

And said to himself, wise-looking,
 'I'd know the eternal plan;
 I'd solve the riddle of fortune,
 The meaning of God and man.'

And a voice came out of the darkness,
 Out, perchance, from his soul—
 'Thou fool! wouldst ladle the ocean
 Into the rim of a bowl!
 Wouldst make thine eye the circle
 Of all that the worlds contain,
 Or gather the stars in a chalice
 No bigger than thy brain?'

Out of the dark came brightness,
 And a second voice replied—
 'Forgive me, oh, forgive me,
 My arrogance and pride!
 Wisdom is born of folly,
 And folly from wisdom grows;
 And he is the wisest of men
 Who knows how little he knows!'

No. XXII.—GIFTS.

You say I throw my gifts to the unworthy:
 So doth the Lord of Love who rules on high;
 So doth the liberal sun to all things earthy,
 To hill or plain, to palace or to sty.
 Who sells his gifts for gratitude expected
 Is but a bargaining huckster at the best;—
 The Sun asks nothing for his rays reflected;
 I ask for nothing—prithee let me rest!

No. XXIII.—SMALL, BUT GREAT.

THE sun can mirror his glorious face
 In the dewdrop on the sod,
 And the humblest human heart reflect
 The light and love of God.

No. XXIV.—THE LAST KINDNESS.

OUR Mother Earth is gracious
 To all she hath possessed,
 To flower or tree, to beast or bird,
 And man—perhaps the best—
 She gives them all permission
 To die upon her breast.

No. XXV.—SEVEN.

SEVEN fresh acorns on the lea,
 Brownd by summer's fiery glow,
 Newly fallen from the tree,
 Fit to plant, and apt to grow ;
 But six of seven shall rot and die,
 And never flourish to the sky,
 Or feel the breezes as they blow.
 Choose the six—select the one—
 Fool ! you cannot ! Fate must run !

Seven sharp daggers, newly made,
 Each the other's counterpart,
 Each the same in sheath and blade,
 Point and edge and workman's art ;
 And yet by Destiny's command,
 One shall fill a murderer's hand,
 And stab a true man to the heart !
 Choose the one—reject the rest—
 Fool ! you cannot ! Fate knows best !

Seven young maidens at the ball,
 Radiant as the new May morn,
 Blithe and joyous, one and all,
 With lips of love and eyes of scorn ;
 Yet four of seven, when wedded wives,
 Shall make their husbands curse their lives,
 And rue the hour that they were born.
 Show the four—select the three—
 Fool ! you may not ! Live and see !

No. XXVI.—THREE FASHIONABLE SISTERS.

SAY, who are ye, ye flaunting hags,
 That walk beside us on the flags ;
 Who smile and grin, and fawn and sneer,
 Or pump the sanctimonious tear ;
 Who sit beside us at the board
 When meat is carved, and wine is poured ;
 And e'en in church presume to kneel,
 And sham the faith ye never feel ?
 ' We're friends well tried—we're sisters three,
 As old as human history ;
 But young and fresh as yestermorn ;—
 Ever dying, ever born.

In the glance of Satan's eyes
We entered into Paradise,
And ever since have played our part
In the ill-furnished human heart.

'Our names—well known o'er land and sea—
Are Humbug, Cant, Hypocrisy!
We scatter falsehoods as we go,
To rich and poor, to high and low.
You find us here—you find us there—
To-day, to-morrow, everywhere;
And ever shall, while men are men,
Or Eden opes its gates again.'

No. XXVII.—CONTENT AND DISCONTENT.

THE world were small and bare indeed,
If measured by Malvoglio's greed;
But, measured by my great content,
My garden is a continent.

No. XXVIII.—AN EPITAPH.

'I've wed my wife,
I've said my say,
I've lived my life,
I've paid my way;
And every dog
Must have his day,
And I've had mine,'
Said Johnnie Gray!

No. XXIX.—À BAS LA POÉSIE.

Down with poetry, down!
Let it rot in the mire of the town!
It puts no money in the till,
It fails to pay the butcher's bill!
The poet, great although he be,
Is not of trade's fraternity.
He cannot vaunt the thing he's made,
As 'twere a coat, a watch, a spade;
For, if he did, the world would grant
Great disapproval—'tis its wont—
And say, 'This creature's vain enough
To praise his own poetic stuff!'
Why should the poet be made or born
To be the mark of modern scorn?

QUIPS AND CRANKS.

Poetry's not to the taste of the time ;
 And he who writes th' immortal rhyme
 Is elbowed out of the busy throng.
 Down with Poetry ! down with Song !

NO. XXX.—THREE GREAT CRITICS.

THREE swine lay wallowing in the mire,
 As fat as farmer could desire ;
 When one Pig to the other said,
 ' Dost see the warm sun overhead ?
 Men call him great and wondrous fine,
 Most noble, glorious, and divine ;
 In my opinion, men are wrong,
 And pile their epithets too strong.'

' And in mine, too,' said Pig the second ;
 ' The sun's less mighty than he's reckoned.
 'Tis true, he flares, and gives us light,
 But then he disappears at night !
 And, to my thought, more lovely far
 Is the pale moon, or evening star.
 They don't affront us with their glare,
 We can look at them, when we dare ;
 But not at him, so proud and hot,
 He'd strike us blind as soon as not.'

' I quite agree,' said Pig the third.
 ' Of course, his merits all have heard ;
 But no one tells of his disgrace,
 Th' intemperate blotches on his face !
 The fevers and the plagues he sends—
 In short, he's flattered by his friends !
 He's bright, no doubt, and all the rest,
 But, to my thinking, moonlight's best !'

Celestials under the Stars and Stripes.

BY JOSEPH HATTON.

THE Five Points of New York is The Seven Dials of London. Poverty and Vice ebb and flow there night and day. But there are elements strangely different under the two flags. London has ancient corners dedicated to Filth for centuries. New York is newer in her muddy ways, though equally dark in her shadows. The island-city has also varieties of race in concentrated numbers which London does not possess. Within the shadow of Five Points, for example, her lower classes include the Nigger and the Chinaman. If the Celestial has his head-quarters at San Francisco, he is characteristically represented in New York, where we recently made his acquaintance in the hours of his leisure, during his recreative exercises. Smoking and gambling are the two indulgences in which the Chinaman takes the greatest delight. He has no home comforts. The domestic joys of married life represent a luxury which he does not permit himself. Out of the 4,000 Chinese women in San Francisco 3,900 are prostitutes, and throughout the State there are nine males to every woman. In the early days of the coolie emigration the Mongolian confined his settlements to California, but he is now gradually spreading himself over the whole of the United States; and already, as he monopolises boot-making in the city of the Golden Gate, so is he taking unto himself the washing of New York.

The system of Chinese emigration to the United States is a perfect system of slavery. It is conducted by six companies as wealthy as they are powerful. Each company is protected by the Chinese Government. Their home agencies are in Canton and Hong Kong. They are represented all through the interior of China by coolie traders. These agents, as the Hon. C. E. De Long, late Minister to China, recently reported to his Government, find, for example, a family of old people with sons and daughters. As is common enough, the poor creatures have had a constant struggle to keep body and soul together. The trader offers to buy the services of a son or a daughter, agreeing to give the old people a sum of money down, and stipulating to feed and clothe the boy or girl, and to return him or her, dead or alive, to the parents; in China after the term of service has expired. In consideration for this, the young man or woman signs a contract

which is absolutely frightful in its conditions. He or she agrees to give faithful service to his or her master for a term of six, eight, or ten years, as the case may be, and for a guarantee of faithful service, father, brother, mother, sisters are mortgaged with a thousand penalties in case the service is not properly performed. The result is that the coolie is bound body and soul, and hence, when the inspector asks, 'Are you leaving China of your own free will?' the answer is, 'I am;' and when called upon to testify on the spot he answers just as may please his master. The men toiling day after day in a strange land are simply paying a debt to keep their fathers and mothers from starving. Mr. Thomas J. Vivian has recently published a financial view of the companies, which shows that they receive from the Celestials in America a yearly stipend in proportion to the money they earn, and that the result represents an enormous profit to the emigration contractors. Of the six companies Mr. Vivian tells us the Sam Yup is the most powerful organisation and the most enterprising. Sam Yup men may be found not only in California, but in other States and Territories from Tucson to Paget Sound, and from San Francisco to Massachusetts and New York. 'Sam Yup lays new railroads in the Southern countries, hews timber in the North, makes cigars in Sacramento, and washes in Boston. Sam Yup is ubiquitous and all-powerful; paternal in the care of its members, and lynx-like in the watchfulness over its own interests.' It is wonderful to see how completely the system works. Then, too, the Chinaman owns no loyalty to anyone outside his company. He has to pay taxes to the 'Red-haired Devils,' who imprison thieves and murderers; but he owes them no further obedience, and while all the money he earns goes back to China, he remains to feed on the stranger, and cheapens labour to such an extent as to keep the whites out of their natural quarters of colonisation. But here we are trenching upon the political aspect of the subject, which is beyond our intention or purpose.

In company with an intelligent detective of the New York police, we recently paid a visit to the opium houses and gambling dens which the Chinese have set up within the shadow of Five Points. Near Donovan's Place we found ourselves in a labyrinth of narrow passages off the main street, very much like a back slum of the East End of London. Some twenty years ago this was a famous loophole for pursued thieves, who had a means of exit from one street to the other, which has recently been barred up with bricks and mortar. Feeling our way along dark and slippery paths, we at length ascended a rickety staircase and entered a genuine opium saloon, far more picturesque in a grim dirty way

than that which Dickens found in London and put into 'The Mystery of Edwin Drood.' The room was partially divided. Lighted by a dim lamp we could see at the further end two narrow compartments, with shadowy figures lying on benches, their square pallid faces indicated by a fitful glimmer of light. A sickly smell pervaded the apartment. We were received by a shrivelled little Mongolian, who looked ugly enough for the idealised conscience of a slanderer.

'Captain John Chinaman,' said the detective, 'this is a friend of mine from England, who is anxious to know you.'

'Tanky—you come see smoke,' said the shrivelled figure, shuffling towards us.

'Yes, yes,' we replied.

'Captain John is the oldest Chinaman in New York,' said the detective.

'You come see smoke,' said John again, pointing to a powerfully-built Celestial, who was lying on a bench on our right, and preparing a pipe for use. He took the preparation of opium from a tin case little larger than a thimble, and cooked a small portion of it by blowing the flame of the lamp upon it through a tube. The action was like that of a plumber soldering a gaspipe. He placed the dried paste upon a small aperture in the bowl of his pipe—a thick primitive-looking implement—and commenced to inhale the smoke. Pulling vigorously at the pipe, he concentrated all his mind upon it, now and then stopping to re-cook and re-fill. Presently the inhalation went on to his complete satisfaction, and there stole over his passionless features a quiet calmness, which Captain John contemplated with a contented nod and grin. Leaving the dreamer to dream his way to a transient happiness, we entered the compartments at the further end of the room. Four Chinamen, in various stages of insensibility, were lying there, the principal luxury of their hard couches being wooden pillows. One man writhed and moaned in his sleep, and they all looked hideous; the ghastly light from the lamp we carried throwing a lurid ray upon the scene, which helped to heighten the common horrors of the den and make up a Dantesque picture.

The Celestial does not drink, but he smokes with a vengeance. The drug is used privately and publicly, and a smoke in a regular opium shop costs from 18 to 25 cents. From Captain John's establishment we went to another next door, and there found quite a family party just beginning to 'lie off,' in honour, as it seemed to us, of a new arrival from China, a bright-eyed young man, evidently of more than ordinary position. He was in full Chinese costume, whereas the others wore a mixture of European and

Eastern garments, all, however, having pigtaails; but this full-dressed Oriental was the only one whom we encountered during our midnight inquiries in the complete garb of his country. It is not impossible that he was an inspector on duty for one of the companies to which his fellow-countrymen belonged.

A short ramble through tortuous alleys and streets brought us to a flight of dark steps leading into a cellar, the door of which opened upon a scene even more interesting than that we had just left. It was a Chinese gambling saloon. Some twenty or thirty natives were standing round a table breast-high, upon which were scattered dice, buttons, cents, and dollars in little proprietary heaps. The banker stood at the head of the board, and as we entered he glanced at the face of the detective. Several of the players looked at us for a moment with their dreamy unspeaking eyes, and then paid no further attention to us. There were no chairs nor seats in the cellar, but the walls were covered with 'Notices' and 'Regulations' written up in big sprawling characters, like extracts from half-forgotten tea chests in the London Docks. In one corner of the room there was a Joss altar, lighted with a pair of brass candlesticks of very English manufacture. There was a show of gaudy decoration on the altar, and an inscription in Chinese; but, when we came to examine the thing more closely, we found that it had been converted into a washstand, unless cleansing the hands with soap is part of the religious devotions at a Joss altar. Seeking in an odd amused way for some clue to this, we looked at the hands of several of the gamblers, and found that they carried their real estate with them, as the Americans say of a person who neglects his finger-nails. 'Tan' is the game mostly played. A large heap of buttons is rapidly divided into three or four lots, and the players bet upon odd or even numbers; but at the den in question, whatever the game might be, it was played with dice and double dominoes. The numbers of the latter were regulated in some way by the numbers thrown in the dice. A player shuffled the dominoes and gave one to each of his fellows. Then the banker threw the dice and the game was decided, the bank paying or receiving. It was worth while to watch the flat Tartar faces. They betokened little or no interest in the game beyond a calm attention to it. There was no excitement, no gesticulation, no talk. Now and then a player would smile and show a set of white teeth. They were dressed like Europeans, and some of them had their hair cut close to their heads. There seemed to me to be food for a world of reflection in the fact that these descendants of a people so ancient and so mysterious should be clustered together in this modern city, thousands of miles away

from the Flowery Land, gambling in a cellar by the light of a Birmingham lamp blazing under a French shade, and surrounded with tokens of their strange home to which they or their bones are booked to return.

'They make excellent servants,' said a doctor, who was one of our midnight party, and who knows them well; 'as cooks they are very successful—you can teach them anything—but they are wofully superstitious. They stay with you for a very long time, and seem to be perfectly happy: suddenly they have a dream, and they must go. I will give you a case in point. I had a Chinaman cook, who not only prepared the dinner but served it himself. When he had dished it up he would slip another garment over his kitchen clothes and wait at table with the quiet perfection of a Frenchman. One evening I noticed that he had put on his Sunday coat, and that while he waited at table he looked anxiously round as if a ghost were at his side. Dinner was hardly finished, when he said, "Me leave you." "When?" I asked. "Now, this minute," he said, looking round as if death were at his elbow. "Another China boy come; better China boy than me." Before the night was over he had introduced his successor and vanished.'

'In regard to their imitative powers and their docility under tuition,' said an amiable colonel who had joined us after our visit to the gambling saloon, 'I can give you a fair illustration. My brother-in-law had a house at Tarrytown. He went to Saratoga in the summer and left his place in charge of two French maids and a Chinese butler. I called there occasionally in my brother-in-law's absence, and found that the butler went through his daily routine in every particular, even to ringing the bell for dinner, when there was no dinner served, as if the family were at home.'

It was now the detective's turn. 'I guess I can tell you a better affair than that. I knew a lady that taught a Chinaman to cook, and she showed him how to make coffee for breakfast, clarifying the coffee with an egg. The first egg she broke was a bad one; she threw it away, and went on with the next. She only learnt, three months afterwards, that her imitative cook regularly threw away the first egg, and only used the second.'

New York is too cosmopolitan ever to have any great difficulty with the national peculiarities of her various classes of foreign citizens; but San Francisco finds herself face to face with a Chinese puzzle, which one day she will break in pieces and solve with judicial calmness. There are thirty thousand of this strange people in San Francisco, herding together like pigs, living in open adultery, cleanly only during the daily employment they get from the whites, but living in indescribable filth at home. The slaves of

companies in China, they do not develop into citizenship. They cheapen labour to such an extent that they kill competition. The Asiatic settler earns money from the white man and trades only with his own race. He does not remain longer than he can help. If he dies, he goes home all the same. Supposing he has money enough to pay the cost of such a luxury, he is embalmed and sent to his friends. If he is poor, his remains are buried until his bones can be gathered together and forwarded as luggage. He has no sympathy for his new home, nothing akin to the Europeans among whom he settles; but like a rat he is gradually burrowing his way into street after street, encompassing the best and most picturesque of the sites upon which San Francisco should extend itself, and turning a garden into a wilderness. Time solves all problems, wipes out all difficulties. The only danger is that San Francisco may grow tired of Time's slow but certain progress, and try her hand at solving this Chinese puzzle herself.

Her Portrait.

LADY, see your portrait's finished;
All that heart and hand could do
Have they wrought upon the canvas,
But to win a smile from you.

On your bosom rose-buds resting,
Purple blooms among your hair,
Snowy wreaths of lace around you
Form a picture passing fair.

Ah! but here I see my failure:
When I gaze upon your eyes,
Every purple-tinted blossom
Seems to wither where it lies.

All the petals of the roses,
When your rounded lips are near,
And your dimpled cheeks are blushing,
Dead as autumn leaves appear.

Yet accept the picture, lady,
Take my wishes for the deed;
For in limning angel's beauty,
How could mortal man succeed?



HER PORTRAIT.

The Lord of Harpington.

BY JAMES PAYN.

SOCIETY is not very exacting in the matter of personal respectability ; but there are certain important occasions, such as the night of the Botanical Fête in the Regent's Park—which is to her what some nocturnal festival of the Church is to the religious world—on which she demands the production of vouchers. I don't know that anything comes of this precaution except polite lying ; but she has, as she flatters herself, discharged her conscience (though as a matter of fact it left her, without warning, many generations ago) and washed her dainty hands of the matter. Now, if ever society should require a permanent personal guarantee of this kind—say, a season ticket to be renewed every year when Rotten Row begins to fill—in my own case, I should know where to go for it. My dear friend—ill-natured people call her my patroness—Lady Paragon, of Eccleston Square, would give it me. Sir Charles, her husband, some folks may think, should be the more proper person to be applied to, since I am of the male sex ; but then those people don't know Sir Charles. Nobody does know him except the croupiers at Monaco, the touts of Epsom, and the members of the *corps de ballet* of Her Majesty's Theatres. To ask him for a voucher for respectability would be like requesting a reserved seat at the Evangelical Conference from the Pope of Rome, or a medical certificate from an elder of the Peculiar People. He has not known what decency means since he was a public school-boy—perhaps we might date back his ignorance even further still—but that does not prevent his wife and family from being the very pink of social perfection.

Most fortunately for Lady Paragon she has money in her own right, secured to her under the most stringent conditions. I know a lady who took the same precautions, and had her very pony-carriage settled upon her. One day she was driving with her husband miles from home, yet managed to fall out with him as though they were beneath their own roof-tree.

'Your companionship is hateful to me,' said the gentleman frankly.

'Very good,' returned the lady ; 'this carriage is mine, be so good as to get out of it.'

'True,' said he, obeying her. 'The ponies, however, are mine ;

and he unharnessed and walked off with them, leaving her seated on her property.

In Lady Paragon's case carriage *and* horses were her own property. Sir Charles had come to her, not, indeed, without a 'trousseau' (if a gentleman's equipment can be so termed), for he possessed a most elegant wardrobe, but without a penny. His personalities consisted of a magnificent dressing-case, a hunting-watch, and a little betting-book bound in morocco, which had cost him more than any firm of publishers ever paid for an Encyclopædia. Why she married him is one of those questions which, like the existence of wasps, the disappearance of inanimate objects when we want them, and what is to be done with the Irish, will continue to puzzle the world till there's an end of it. He cost her about 30,000*l.* during the first year, and then she got rid of him for an annuity of 2,000*l.* paid monthly. In his application for this stipend he exhibits a punctuality which was the only thing for which he had hitherto failed to obtain credit.

At forty-five, when I last saw him (in the Ring at Epsom), he had a youthful figure, the face of an angel on a gargoyle, and a voice (it was offering a shade under the proper odds) that for sweetness and harmony was not to be found out of a cathedral choir.

That a wife like Lady Paragon should have only taken a year to find him out was a proof of his utter worthlessness indeed; and the discovery was quite complete. His name never passes her lips, nor those of her only daughter. Miss Helen, of course, knows of her father's existence; she has access to the daily papers, in which the heading, 'Sir Charles Paragon again,' in connection with various disreputable occurrences, is by no means unfrequent, but she ignores the fact with that innocent calmness with which all unpleasant matters are laid aside by those who have acquired the manners of the best circles.

Perhaps it was this terrible domestic experience that rendered Lady Paragon so extraordinarily sensitive to what was right and proper; but, at all events, her recommendation in society went further than that of most leaders of fashion, to which, however, she made small pretence. Only—what seemed to a mere outsider like myself as very strange—she set almost the same value upon birth and rank as upon talents and virtue, and treated myself, for instance, with no greater respect than any titled worldling that came in her way. With so striking an example of scoundrelism as her baronet husband, with his long line of ancestry with a brute at the end of it, always in her memory, one would have *thought* that the guinea stamp would have no great influence with

her; that she would have looked only to the ring of the metal. But this, as I have shown, was far from being the case.

Indeed, she paid what I venture to think a ludicrous attention to little accidents of birth and position, and looked on the possessors of them, not only as fortunate, but meritorious. She made a point of knowing nobody who could not boast of at least a grandfather—and thereby made me, for the first time, thank my stars that I happened to have one, though I don't say to boast of, for he was an attorney. She believed in the saying, 'It takes more than one generation to make a gentleman;' concerning which I can only say for certain that it sometimes takes a great many more. We used to have many arguments together on this matter in an amicable way; in which I am bound to say she always acknowledged my great abilities. 'You are a dear, clever creature; but if you talked from now till Doomsday, you will never alter my opinions, nor catch me opening my doors to anyone connected with trade.'

She even one day (when I had really shaken her upon this point) went the length of stating that she was too old to change her views.

'What, too old at thirty-five?'

'Thirty-five! How dare you, with Helen there just of age?'

I had inadvertently pushed compliment to the verge of impropriety; but she was far too good a woman not to forgive me.

Though forty, or even a year or two more, Lady Paragon was still beautiful, some paradoxical folks averred more beautiful even than her daughter, though she was the belle of that very season. For my part, I was content, in my quiet way, and without making any comparison, to be in-love with them both.

In consequence of the large slice of her income thrown to that insatiable dog, Sir Charles, Lady Paragon was unable to occupy her own ancestral mansion in the country, which was let for a term of years; but every summer she was accustomed to hire a residence for herself and daughter, for three or four months—a plan which I never ventured to tell her was infinitely more pleasant than if she had occupied the family seat. For in this manner she got the pick and choice of the prettiest districts in England; and, though she pitched her tent at various times in the four quarters of it, her good taste never led her into a mistake. Her mode of procedure was this: After conference with some London house agent, Miss Helen would run down, under convoy, to look at the 'Hall,' 'House,' 'Park,' or whatever ambitious title the place had, and, if her report was favourable, her ladyship in person would pay it a visit, which was generally final, for, to say truth, if what satisfied the young lady failed to meet with the approbation of other people, they must

have been rather difficult to please. Not only did the mansion need to be upon a considerable scale, with the mellow flavour of antiquity about it, but it had to be furnished with all the modern improvements, and the agent's phrase of a 'thorough gentleman's residence' went a very little way with her unless it was in the occupation of a *bonâ fide* 'county family.' This charming phrase has no counterpart in the metropolitan vocabulary (that of 'carriage people' being but a very faint approach to it); and was to Lady Paragon one of intense significance.

When she took up her temporary quarters anywhere she expected 'the neighbourhood' would acknowledge her presence in a befitting manner, which was generally by making calls in a stately fashion, and entertaining her at very heavy dinner parties, which she returned with much better ones, including ices from Gunter's. In this way, I suppose, she became acquainted with about three-fifths of the landed gentry, and, as her London circle was also a very large one, she might be said to know a good many people; and not one of them connected with trade.

At the close of the season before last, Lady Paragon entered into arrangements for renting a house in the Lake country. As it was so far from London, one visit was deemed sufficient, which she and Miss Helen took together. The latter spoke of 'Harpington Hall' with an enthusiasm I have rarely heard her exhibit on the subject of houses (which at the best she generally described as 'really very tolerable'); and the topic had a personal attraction for me, since her mother was always so good as to ask me to stay with them a week or two during their rustication. Harpington Hall was old and intensely ancestral; its internal arrangements as to comfort were, on the other hand, in the last Parisian style. Mr. Marmaduke Howard, the proprietor, was everything he should be, and took a pride in his residence that some persons would have considered exaggerated. He was so particular about the gravel sweep in front of his house, that a cord was stretched where the drive through the park abutted on it, and visitors had to walk for fifty yards or so to prevent the impress of wheel or hoof upon this sacred spot. In wet weather this must have been inconvenient; but his visitors happened to call on the one fine day that the Lake district had known for the last nine weeks, and they rather applauded this delicate solicitude than otherwise. No mere owner of a 'Villa Residence,' or ordinary country house of any kind, would have ventured upon putting up that cord.

Mr. Howard, who was a bachelor of the old school, with quite the air of a Sir Charles Grandison, entertained the ladies very hospitably, and they resented with some warmth my cynical sugges-

tion that this was done perhaps for the same reason that wine is handed round at auctions, to give a freedom to the bidding. Nevertheless they agreed to take Harpington Hall, on his own terms, before they left it. Nay, so favourably impressed were they with their host that, when he mentioned that business unavoidably called him up to town, they asked him to look in at Eccleston Square to lunch, and I had the honour to meet him on that occasion.

His appearance, while typical of the country gentleman, struck me as even something more. There was a certain generous air about him which reminded me of those baronial times (as represented on canvas) when hospitality was dispensed with open hands to grateful vassals. I could picture him standing on his own hall steps, and giving away deer and other kind of superior game, surrounded by his henchmen. Nay, the idea haunted me that I *had* actually seen him doing it, which was absurd; unless indeed (which was just possible) his portrait had ever been taken by a Royal Academician (he looked too grand for a mere Associate to have done it) to adorn some such mediæval scene. With all this engaging benevolence of expression, there was a quietude of manner about him which in a common man might have been set down to apathy, or even dulness, but which in Mr. Marmaduke Howard of Harpington Hall was obviously Blood.

Towards the end of the autumn I took advantage of Lady Paragon's invitation to visit the Lakes. I arrived somewhat late, and, of course, in the rain; but there was sufficient light to note the features of the scenery in which the Hall was placed. It was situated half way up what in London one would have called a precipice, at the foot of which lay a dark far-stretching mere. The carriage-drive which led up to it from the high road was of great length, and wound through a forest of pines, above which the mansion itself towered in solitary grandeur.

It was the most imposing edifice that had yet sheltered even the Paragon household—except, perhaps, their family seat, which I had never seen—and possessed, doubtless, immense advantages, but it struck a mere practical mind as dreary. It was a sort of place that ought to have had a Banshee on the premises, and at least one haunted chamber. To my surprise and relief, I found that I was allowed to drive up to the front door, where I was as usual welcomed by Dunscombe (the ancestral butler) with a solemnity I have never seen equalled in any other human being, but which may possibly be the manners of a Prince of the Church. My reception by the ladies was as hospitable as ever, but I saw at once that something was amiss. ‘There are ghosts

in the house, no doubt,' thought I, and began to wish myself at the Lake Hotel (down below) among the tourists. However, I put a good face upon the matter, and, by way of saying something pleasant, congratulated Miss Helen upon the rope having been removed from the carriage-sweep.

'Oh, as to that,' said she indifferently, 'the rope might just as well be at the lodge gates as at the house itself, for no one ever calls.'

'Good heavens!' thought I, 'it must be a horrible ghost indeed, if it keeps people away even in the daytime!'

We dined in a Gothic apartment of vast size, the gloom of which a very plentiful supply of candles failed to pierce; if it had not been an irreverence to hint at such a thing in connection with ancestral pictures larger than life, and a mantelpiece of carved oak that projected to an extent suggestive of hydrocephalus, I should have suggested that a few gasburners would have been a great improvement. Miss Helen, it will be remembered, when she fell in love with it, had only seen the Hall by day. Since she had become better acquainted with it, it was plain that it had failed to please her. For my part, I thought the dinner as good as it could be in so wild a part of the country, where shops were unknown, and 'first catch your sheep' was probably a proviso to be made before you cooked your mutton; but I noticed that Miss Helen had little appetite, and that the manner in which she said 'no *fish*, thank you,' to the butler, would in a less angelic being have had the appearance of 'temper.' In the hope of making matters pleasant, I inquired after Mr. Howard, entitling him, in my humorous way, the Lord of Harpington; but she not only replied that she didn't know, but said so in a tone that implied unmistakably she didn't care.

I had now become positively certain that there were ghosts, and would have gladly compounded for a simple family spectre, which could be warranted only to sigh, or point to buried bones or money. But to my surprise and relief there was no nocturnal disturbance of any kind. My bed and bedroom were all that the most luxurious sleeper could desire; and, indeed, the neatness and finish of the whole mansion were such that (if I may venture to say so of so historic a pile) it looked as if it had been just turned out of a bandbox. The weather being wet the next morning, I was shown over the picture-gallery by Lady Paragon in person, Miss Helen unaccountably declining to act as cicerone—a part she had always been graciously pleased to play on similar occasions; I even overheard her remark to her mother that 'she hadn't the patience for it,' which I thought a little rude. It was true the pictures had little attrac-

tion, except for the proprietor and his belongings, for they were almost all ancestral portraits: Howards in ruffs, Howards in doublets, Howards in trunk hose, Howards as ministers of state with finger on forehead, Howards as soldiers significantly tapping their sword-hilts, Howards as shepherdesses with crooks and eyes; in fact, to an irreverent mind they might have almost suggested the lines,

Of rabbits young and rabbits old,
Of rabbits hot and rabbits cold,
Of rabbits tender and rabbits tough,
Thank you, my lady, I've had enough—

with the substitution for 'rabbits' of the word 'Howards.'

'The family, I suppose,' said I, suppressing a yawn, 'is of great antiquity.'

Lady Paragon murmured something about 'of all ages,' which I took to be her exaggerated style of speaking on such subjects.

'How strange it is,' I pursued, 'that the Lord of Harpington has never married. He must have been angled for by many a stately dame, no doubt.'

'Angled!' said her ladyship sharply; 'you may well say that.'

'And yet he has not been hooked?'

'Hooked!' echoed she again. 'No, *he* has not been hooked.'

'Oh, I see; he is not the last of the Howards; there are other members of this ancient family.'

'Mr. Howard has a married brother, and plenty of nephews and nieces, I believe.'

I now felt positively certain that there was something wrong; she would never have spoken of the cadets of this noble line as 'plenty of nephews and nieces' unless that brother had committed himself in some atrocious way. He could not have been hanged, however, or that rope would hardly have been stretched across the gravel-sweep, since it would naturally remind visitors of the family misfortune.

The contents of the library, which I had plenty of opportunities of looking into during my stay at the Hall, for it rained incessantly, were very varied. 'The Lord of Harpington,' I observed to Miss Helen, 'has a Catholic taste. By-the-by, I suppose, from his name and lineage, that he *is* a Catholic?'

'I don't know, I'm sure; I should think *not*,' answered she in a tone of unmistakable contempt.

'He possesses many works of Catholic theology; but also, it is true, of other ologies. In the way of books, all seems "fish that comes to his net."'

The remark was received in silence; it needed, indeed, no reply;

but I noticed that Lady Paragon bit her lips, and that a frown puckered Miss Helen's brow. It was evident that the Lord of Harpington had ceased to be the popular topic of conversation he had been of old, and for the rest of my stay I took care not to mention his name; though what he had done to wreck his reputation with my friends I could not discover. On my return to London I happened one evening to be walking home up Regent Street and had to pass through a throng of poor people in front of a fishmonger's shop. I had often seen them there before, for it was the hour—half-past seven or so—when, the dinner orders being over, the fashionable purveyor is wont to dispense his perishable commodities at a reduced rate to a class very different from his usual customers. By the flaring gas I noticed the chief figure, a fine stalwart individual, dispensing, with a noble air of benevolence, the tail ends of cod, and some rather anatomical specimens of skate. In an instant my mind reverted with a flash to the mediæval baron surrounded by his retainers, indulging his lavish generosity among the tenantry of his vast estate. I did not require to read the name upon the shop front, 'Howard and Brothers, fishmongers,' to reveal to me the mystery that clung to the Lord of Harpington. I recognised the very man—though a green baize apron now concealed his extremities—whom I had met at luncheon in Eccleston Square. Of course, it was creditable in him, rather (from the 'self-made man' point of view), to act in this way; but I felt that his tenants at Harpington Hall would take a different view of the matter.

Of course, they had soon found out the reason why the county families did not call on them. How I must have wounded their sensibilities by those unhappy references of mine to 'angling' and 'hooking' and 'nets,' which now recurred to me with terrible force, as always happens under similar circumstances! What an ordeal must poor Lady Paragon have undergone in the picture-gallery while exhibiting the ancestors which she knew were all from Wardour Street! It was, doubtless, because Mr. Howard had invested so much money in ancestors that Miss Helen had had 'no patience with him,' and the reason was equally plain why beneath that roof she could never bring herself to eat fish for dinner. The mansion, as I afterwards learnt, and I have no doubt she knew it, was called in the neighbourhood Fishmongers' Hall.

Of course, I never told the Paragons that I had discovered this fatal secret. It is bad enough for them to be conscious that they entertained a fishmonger to luncheon unawares, without feeling that I am also cognisant of the fact.

The Lord of Harpington is as much a sealed subject with me in Eccleston Square as its should-be host Sir Charles himself.

The Argot of Polite Society.

It is curious to watch the gradual rise and fall of a popular locution; to note how the once familiar phrase imperceptibly sinks into disuse, and is replaced by another doomed to an existence equally ephemeral. Could Thackeray and Albert Smith revisit us, the former would find his dearly beloved 'snob' ruthlessly metamorphosed into 'cad;' while the 'gent' of the latter has long since become as obsolete as the beaux, bucks, and dandies of former days, now amalgamated under the generic title of 'swell.' Those genial appellations of our youth, 'trump' and 'brick,' may still linger in the border-land of conversation; but the laudatory encomium in vogue nowadays appears to be 'a rattling good fellow,' and, lower down in the social scale, 'a one-er.' The highest expression of admiration is comprised in a 'stunner,' and the reverse is languidly intimated by the annihilating term, 'bad form.'

A gentleman who experiences a certain difficulty in crossing Piccadilly at 10 P.M. is described as 'screwed,' or more generally 'tight;' a glaring waistcoat or trouser pattern, such as Joseph Sedley and Grassot were wont to delight in, is simply voted 'loud,' and the slightest deviation from the ordinary jog-trot of respectability stigmatised as 'fast.' London is playfully spoken of as the 'village,' and the fashionable Sunday resort in the Regent's Park arbitrarily abbreviated into 'Zoo.' To 'bolt,' 'mizzle,' or 'make oneself scarce' are superseded by 'slope' and 'skedaddle;' the 'muff' of yesterday is the 'duffer' of to day; while loss of fortune, a fall from one's horse (otherwise 'cropper'), or indeed any calamity incidental to human nature, is pithily and expressively designated 'coming to grief.'

If personal chastisement be intended, the offender is not to be 'thrashed' or 'pitched into,' but his head is to be 'punched;' a threat, we are rejoiced to say, more frequently talked about than put into execution. A cigar is figuratively styled a 'weed,' an innovation applicable enough to the anomalous compounds of nastiness retailed at the Derby, the Boat-race, and other public gatherings, but an evident misnomer as regards the fragrant samples issuing from Mr. Benson's emporium; and its concomitant drink has been quaintly and far more intelligibly christened B.S. (N.B., after too copious libations of the above a man is apt to feel 'chippy' next morning). The word 'cheek,' as synonymous with

conceit or impudence, is, notwithstanding its relative antiquity, still largely patronised by the lovers of *argot*; but were it not for the obliging correspondent of—if we mistake not—the ‘Daily Telegraph,’ ‘tall talk,’ a Transatlantic phrase of apparently similar import and of undoubted originality, might never have been naturalised among us.

From the newspaper to the novel there is but a step; and in the latter department of literature, especially in the so-called pictures of modern life and manners, more than one example might be found, if not of positive *argot*, at least of what is equally objectionable—an utter ignorance or exaggeration of the tone and language of the society they profess to describe. Without pushing matters so far as the scrupulous Dr. Dilworth in the farce, who indignantly declined to accept a lucrative post offered to him because the prospectus issued by the company asserted the plural of omnibus to be *omnibi*, the reader may fairly expect to be spared such vulgarisms as ‘arn’t you’ or ‘arn’t they,’ repeated *ad nauseam* through the three hundred and odd pages of each volume; not to mention the inevitable adverb ‘awfully;’ but concerning this particular abomination we shall have more to say by-and-by. Now, though in every-day conversation such little absurdities may pass unnoticed, they decidedly do not look well in print; *littera scripta manet*, even though its ultimate destiny may be to envelop fried potatoes or line portmanteaux.

We object, moreover, to the too frequent use or rather abuse of the verb ‘realise;’ a most comprehensive word in its way, but, like the omnipresent melted butter of the English plain cook, or the *toujours perdrix* of our Gallic neighbours, apt to pall on constant repetition; nor do we honestly admire the distortion of the simple and hearty ‘thank you’ into the curt and ungracious ‘thanks.’ But there is one expression, current in literary circles, to which we entertain a special aversion, probably from not being able to ascertain what it can possibly mean, and that is ‘slating’ a book. Tradition tells us how the youthful muse of Keats was pitilessly ‘cut up’ by the ‘Quarterly,’ and we learn from Mr. Pendennis himself that his ‘spring flowers’ were ‘smashed’ by the ferocious Bludyer; but when we are informed that Mr. So-and-so’s last poem or Mrs. Anybody’s new novel has been ‘slated’ by the ‘Weekly Thunderbolt’ or the ‘Hebdomadal Bowie-Knife,’ we can but open the eyes of astonishment, like Hajji Baba, and marvel at the inventive elasticity of our mother tongue!

With theatrical *argot* we have nothing to do, except in so far as it concerns the spectator: the *coulisse* and the green-room are at present forbidden topics to us; and if a manager chooses to

issue his orders in Sanscrit, or the *corps de ballet* have a fancy for talking *javanais* (as used to be the fashion at the Paris Vaudeville), it is no business of ours. Two objectionable Thespian peculiarities, however, coming under the daily observation of every playgoer, and therefore public property, may be briefly adverted to; namely, what we may call the *argot* of the *affiche*, and that of the stage. And here, if the gentle reader will take our word for its necessity, a slight retrospect to the 'palmy days' of the drama is indispensable.

Forty or fifty years ago—and we may antedate that period as far back as we think proper—an actress was invariably designated in the bills by her family name (real or fictitious, matters little), without any adjunct whatsoever. When two or more sisters were in the profession, the only distinguishing mark for each was the initial letter of the Christian name; for instance, Miss M. Tree and Miss E. Tree, Miss Cawse and Miss H. Cawse, and so forth. Miss O'Neill never figured as Miss Eliza O'Neill, Miss Stephens as Miss Catherine Stephens, Miss Foote as Miss Maria Foote, or (in our own time) Miss Woolgar as Miss Sarah Woolgar. Mrs. Bartley, whom we can still remember in *Lady Macbeth*, was for many years known and applauded under the unpretending name of Smith, and her lively contemporary, the 'Sally' Booth of the green-room, was spoken of by press and public as Miss Booth to her dying day. Where were then the Nellies, Bessies, Annies, Lizzies, Lotties, and Maggies who, in theatres devoted to burlesque or (what in England is very nearly identical) *opéra bouffe*, now parade their insipid diminutives here, there, and everywhere, with the same pertinacity as they exhibit their tunics and *chignons* in the photographer's window? Fancy in the olden time 'Romeo and Juliet' advertised, the part of Juliet by Miss 'Lizzie' O'Neill, or the Clemanthe of 'Ion' obligingly undertaken by Miss 'Nelly' (or, worse still, 'Nellie') Tree! If Miss Stubbs feels inclined to call herself De Courcy (like the little Wood Elf in 'Puck'), or if Miss Bacon, aspiring at higher game, has a weakness for Mowbray or Plantagenet, they only do as others have done before them; for was not the charming Rose Chéri by birth a *Cizos*, and should not Madame Cabel be more correctly styled *Cabu*? With every respect for their real or assumed godfathers and godmothers, we object to one-third of the playbill being absorbed by their baptismal memorials, and therefore protest against the prevailing system, firstly, as conferring an undue importance on mere accessorial nullities, and secondly, as entailing an unwarrantable waste of printer's ink.

But the *argot* of the stage is a far more serious calamity than

the comparatively trifling nuisance just complained of; if the eye be offended by the one, the ear is absolutely martyred by the other. There is no lack of sterling histrionic talent in London; no city in the world, perhaps, with the single exception of Paris, can boast a greater variety of artistic excellence—dispersed, it is true, in every direction, north, south, east, and west—but not the less remarkable in each particular speciality of the drama. How is it, then, that on leaving an English theatre we are so seldom entirely satisfied with our evening's entertainment? What is wanting to excite our sympathies and render the scenic illusion harmonious and complete? The simplest thing in the world: 'one touch of nature.' How is it possible to listen approvingly or even patiently, when our ears are perpetually jarred by false intonations, spasmodic gasps, and that indescribable twang which seems to be a necessary ingredient in every actor and actress's professional education? What is the origin of this distressing cacophony? Are there mysterious beings, like M. Tristapatte, in Paul de Kock's 'Zizine,' who hold classes for the express purpose of inculcating stagey declamation and inaccurate emphasis; or are we to consider this combination of whine and drawl as a form of speech consecrated by tradition, and religiously adhered to by its votaries even in the dressing-gown and slippers of private life? If not, why in the name of common sense is not this palpable absurdity consigned, together with empty rouge-pots, worn-out hare's feet, and similar useless lumber, to everlasting limbo? The French, who are not altogether tyros in dramatic effect, do very well without it, and why should not we? If ever the day should come when English actors condescend to speak, walk, and move like ordinary mortals, and modulate their voices according to the diapason of civilised society, then may our stage be said to 'hold the mirror up to nature,' but most assuredly not before.

As we are on theatrical matters, a word or two respecting the abuse of 'tags,' a species of improvised *argot*, may be permitted us. We by no means object to the quips and cranks emanating from the inventive brain of the facetious Mr. Toole, which have at least the merit of being amusing, nor to the time-honoured appeal (when spoken by a pretty woman, *bien entendu*) at the close of old five-act comedies; but we have a strongly-rooted antipathy to any needless interpolations in the text of a standard, we may almost say classic, author. About two years ago we passed a most agreeable evening in a highly popular and fashionable theatre, the access to which, like the labyrinth at Hampton Court, is a puzzle to the adventurous pedestrian. In this luxurious retreat the stalls, bounded in the extreme distance by a sort of genteel purgatory

called the pit, are commodious and delightfully elastic; and the orchestra, doubtless on account of some grave misdemeanour, is confined in a subterraneous locality, from whence issue doleful sounds in the intervals between the acts. The play was the 'School for Scandal;' and in the scene where the supposed duel between Sir Peter and Charles is so circumstantially related the gentleman who enacted Crabtree completed his information respecting the 'double letter from Northamptonshire' by adding (we quote from recollection, and cannot vouch for the exact words): 'Whether the letter was prepaid or not, I can't say.' Now, though this phrase may, for all we know to the contrary, be found in what is technically styled the 'acting edition,' it is certainly not in Sheridan; and we were sorely tempted to rise from our seat and apostrophise the offender, as Mrs. Piozzi once did, with a 'Text, Mr. Crabtree, text, if you please!'

But we have lingered too long in the Gardens of Armida, and have hardly space left for a still more alluring theme, the *argot des salons*, as adopted by the bewitching enchantresses of Belgravia and Mayfair. Very mild and inoffensive in general are the epithets grafted on our national vernacular by these fair reformers, occasionally verging on the unintelligible, and in many cases exhibiting a profound disregard for Lindley Murray. Before, however, venturing to cull a few flowers from their rich and varied *répertoire*, we wish it to be distinctly understood that we by no means guarantee that by the time our manuscript is in the printer's hands the gems in question may not have been already discarded in favour of others; such supplementary novelties being in the habit of perpetually 'cropping up' like mushrooms.

So much being premised, we open the floodgates of our memory, and out springs with irrepressible eagerness the appropriate dissyllable 'gushing,' a term suggestive at first sight of crystal streams and pellucid fountains, but bearing here a very different meaning. According to feminine interpretation, the word 'gushing' answers to the French phrase *trop expansif*, and is more frequently used in a repellent than in a laudatory sense, being habitually applied to overstrained professions of attachment, or exaggerated manifestations of approval. We have heard the eloquence of an extempore preacher characterised by a very old enthusiast in spectacles as 'gushing,' and a certain Mrs. Pardiggle, of tract-dispensing notoriety, has alluded to a Mr. Gusher as capable, when stationed in a waggon, on a broad expanse of lawn, of 'improving' almost any occasion to an unlimited extent; but on Mr. Pickwick's principle, 'when there are two mobs, shout with the largest,' it is safer to regard the derivatives of 'gush' in

general and 'gushing' in particular as the reverse of complimentary.

To impulsive young ladies of the above description the little word 'too' is an invaluable conversational resource, when preceding an adjective denoting admiration, joy, or any other pleasurable sensation, as 'too' nice, 'too' delightful, 'too' lovely. In some cases the *ne plus ultra* of satisfaction is expressed by the addition of 'quite,' as 'quite too' charming; to which Mr. Punch's exquisite, out-Heroding Herod, will complacently reply, 'Very quite most quite!'

But where we find the most astounding example of colloquial barbarism is, as before hinted, in the indiscriminate application by everybody to everything of the adverb 'awfully,' which bids fair to become as intolerable a nuisance as 'Spring, Spring,' on a barrel-organ, or the lithographic circulars of advertising tailors and wine merchants. Go where you will, there is no escaping it. Let the subject under discussion be what it may—a dinner at Richmond or Greenwich, Mr. Tennyson's 'Harold,' the latest novelty in sleeves, lawn tennis, or the octopus at the Brighton Aquarium—female ingenuity will contrive to work it into every second sentence, with the same disregard for its real meaning as that displayed by a *chanteuse légère* when introducing her shakes and roulades precisely where they are not wanted. And yet, oddly enough, its use or rather abuse is wholly confined to the fraction of society familiarly designated the 'Upper Ten;' it is ignored by the middle classes, and utterly deprecated by the lower. The butcher, who proudly mounts guard over his saddles and sirloins, never dreams of influencing a customer by the assurance that such and such a joint may be depended upon as 'awfully' tender; nor do the urbane *employés* of Messrs. Marshall and Snelgrove seek to enhance the merits of their silks and satins by declaring them to be 'awfully' cheap. We once heard a remarkably small member of the mobocracy observe in confidence to a passing acquaintance that he was 'hawfully peckish;' but as the youth in question was then standing at the entrance of the mews on Hay Hill, a decidedly aristocratic neighbourhood, we suspect that he had gleaned the fashionable phrase from the lips of some *cocher de bonne maison*, and aspired to it according to his own peculiar ideas of pronunciation. In any case this can only be quoted as an exception to a very general rule; and 'awfully' remains to all intents and purposes a supplementary excrescence exclusively patrician and—candour compels us to add—supremely idiotic.

'Not half bad' is unquestionably *argot*, and 'I am *that* tired' or '*that* thirsty' is worse; but the severest trial of all to a sensitive

ear is the semi-professional jargon of the 'sporting young lady.' She is learned in the phraseology of the stable, and has the current odds on every imaginable race at her fingers' ends; the organisation of 'sweeps' and 'pools' is her special delight; and so cleverly does she attend to her own interest in the delicate matter of 'discretions,' that she not only supplies her particular intimates with fans and scent-bottles, but has never been known to spend a single sixpence in gloves from the beginning to the end of the season. Now and then, she petitions her brother—or cousin—or Harry Sabretasche, of the Blues—to invest a sovereign or two for her on what they may consider a 'moral;' and never misses an opportunity of securing a 'tip' for a forthcoming event, which she carefully stores up in her memory for future use. Even in the ball-room she will have an eye to business, and, waylaying some unwary stranger, will bewilder him with an avalanche of questions on her favourite topic, of which in nine cases out of ten he knows less than herself; concluding perhaps by asking him his private opinion respecting the chance of Bottle-ends for the City and Suburban, and stating her intention of backing him notwithstanding his unpropitious trial with Nose-jewel and Sister to Scrimmage; 'for after all,' she will add, with an engaging smile, 'he may not have been "meant," you know, and the mare *may* have won by a "fluke."

This is bad enough in all conscience; but the hair positively stands on end when a pretty woman confidentially informs you that Mr. Wilkie Collins's last novel is a 'ripping' book (she certainly did blush a little when she said it, as if conscious of having let slip something naughty!), and in the same breath denounces Professor von Goggleheim's masterly treatise on 'Æsthetic Concatenations' as 'rot.' Now, friendly male reader, if you had heard this, what would you have done? You would naturally have said, 'My dear Mrs. M. or N. (as the case might be), you have of course read Goethe's "Faust"?' On her answering in the affirmative, which she would be sure to do, whether she had read it or not, you would have reminded her of the scene where Faust, while executing a *pas de deux* with the young and not ill-favoured Witch, suddenly starts back, and, on being asked the reason by his mentor Mephistopheles, replies that he had just seen 'a red mouse jump out of her mouth!'

Such would evidently have been your courteous and apposite rebuke. *Query*, would Mrs. M. or N. have understood and profited by its application?

Juliet.

BY MRS. H. LOVETT CAMERON.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

A DIAMOND LOCKET AND A ROSEBUD.

GRETCHEN RUDENBACH sat in her pretty little drawing-room in Victoria Villas, with both elbows leaning on the table, her chin in her hands, and her eyes fixed on something in front of her. The something is a diamond-studded locket in a blue velvet case.

Don't be alarmed, gentle, virtuous-souled reader—there is no disgraceful episode, no shameful meaning, attached to this sparkling jewelled ornament. It is simply and solely a wedding present.

When Gretchen Rudenbach had written to Cis Travers and asked him to come and see her, and had so prevented his accompanying his wife to her dinner at Hurlingham, it was that she really wished for his counsel and advice upon a very important subject.

The fact was, that she had lately fallen in again with her old admirer, David Anderson—no longer the shambling, awkward, wild, red-bearded David of the old singing-class days in Blandford Street, but a sleek, well-mannered, well-to-do-looking David, inclined to be portly, and wearing irreproachable clothes—who bore upon his outer man the impress of the success of his life, and who had the grave and serious aspect of a moneyed Scotch merchant.

Mr. David Anderson stood now in his dead father's shoes, and was head partner of the hide and tallow business in Glasgow; and the younger Anderson, from his early experience and training in a good London house of business, had made a much more profitable thing out of hide and tallow than ever his somewhat humdrum and old-fashioned father had done. Mr. David Anderson had his town house in Glasgow and his country house near Dunoon, on the banks of the Clyde, where his widowed mother kept house for him, and where he soon began to desire to instal a wife.

Then he bethought himself of his first love, the blue-eyed maiden with the German name, who had so snubbed and despised him in the old days.

It was not likely, thought our friend, with the serene self-satisfaction of a self-made wealthy man, and with, it must be owned, some knowledge of the weaknesses of the fair sex—it was not likely that she would scorn and despise him now—now that he had so impor-

tant a name in the hide and tallow business, and could offer her a rich and comfortable home, with any number of servants at her command, and handsome carriages to drive about in. A plain and ungainly wooer presents a very different appearance to the female mind when he is backed up by such arguments as these.

So David Anderson came up to London and hunted up his old love with some little difficulty and a praiseworthy perseverance, and made her, without more ado, a plain statement of his means, and an offer of his hand and fortune.

And then it was that Gretchen sent off for Cis Travers to ask his advice.

She could no more have helped turning to him in any crisis of her life than she could help, in spite of her judgment and reason, considering him the best and dearest of men.

There was about this little woman a humility of gratitude, a dog-like fidelity which nothing could ever alter or change in her. She considered that she owed every success of her life to his boyish kindness to her, and she could never forget it.

So she sent for him, to advise her whether she should marry David, or whether she should reject him. And Cis Travers gave her pretty nearly the same advice that he had given her five years ago, when he used to walk with her to her music lessons in Bloomsbury Square. He told her that David was not half good enough for her, that he was rough and ungainly, that she would be throwing herself away upon him, and that she must not think of it.

Selfishly, as in the old days, though he could not marry her himself, he did not want anyone else to have her.

Gretchen, resenting inwardly every word that he said, promised, nevertheless, to think it over for a day and a night before she decided. And when the day and the night were over, she wrote to him and told him that, in spite of his advice, she had determined that she would marry David, that he had much improved in every way, and she felt sure that he would make her happy, and that she did not think it would be right to refuse so very good an offer. And by the same post she wrote to David, and in a few simple, grateful words accepted him for her lover.

Cis Travers thereupon went out and bought her the diamond locket, and sent it to her with a letter so full of tragical reproaches and despairing reproofs to her for her cruelty to him, and broken-hearted prayers for her happiness, that even Gretchen could not help laughing at it as the most absurd and extravagant letter from a married man to a woman who was nothing but his friend and his confidante, that could possibly have been penned.

And the locket gave her no pleasure. It was too handsome a gift under the circumstances, and Gretchen felt sure that her future husband would not approve of it.

She was still sitting puzzling over it when David Anderson came in.

‘Look here,’ she said to him; ‘Mr. Travers has just sent me this locket. I wish he had not—it is too handsome for me.’

‘I don’t know about being too handsome, my dear,’ answered her lover, looking at her proudly. ‘I could, and mean to, give you plenty of diamonds far handsomer than that, and I am sure they will be none too good for you; but that is too handsome a present for Mr. Travers to give you—you are right there.’

Gretchen had instinctively crushed up the offensively exaggerated letter in her hand and slipped it into her pocket as Mr. Anderson entered. No occasion to make him jealous on the second day of her engagement to him!

‘Well,’ she said, standing up and shutting the case; ‘I don’t like taking it, for I feel sure his wife would not like his giving it to me;’ and she blushed a little as she spoke.

‘Very likely not, my dear. What do you mean to do about it?’

‘Why, David, that is just what I was going to ask you—what would you advise me to do?’ she asked, with a sweet deferential glance up at him.

‘Send it back to him, my dear,’ answered honest David.

‘That is just what I think I ought to do,’ she answered; ‘but how shall I do it? for he has been a very kind friend to me all my life, and I should be very sorry to offend him or hurt his feelings.’

‘Well, Gretchen, I should advise you to take it back yourself and give it to his wife; such a present should not go to any but a man’s own wife—let her have it and do what she likes with it.’

‘You are quite right, David, and I will follow your advice,’ cried Gretchen with alacrity. And she folded the case back in its papers, locked it up in her desk, and determined to carry it back to Grosvenor Street herself on the morrow.

It was Sunday afternoon, and Juliet was sitting alone; Mrs. Dalmaine had been lunching with her, but had left. Flora had gone home two days ago, and Cis had gone out by himself. All at once the door opened, and Miss Rudenbach was announced.

With everything within her kindling into an angry indignation at the name, Juliet rose from her chair to receive her visitor with well-bred surprise at the visit in her face.

Gretchen came forward, blushing and trembling, holding a white parcel in her hand.

'You will wonder at my calling on you, Mrs. Travers,' she said nervously; 'but I wanted to give you this—this parcel—it is a present which your husband—'

'Excuse me, Mademoiselle Rudenbach,' interrupted Juliet, with haughty sternness; 'if your business is with my husband, he is not at home; and surely whatever you may have to say to him cannot be fittingly said to his wife.'

'But no—' answered Gretchen, looking up at her with a calm surprise in her blue eyes; 'I do not want him; it is to you I wanted to speak. He is very kind—he has given me a present which is far too handsome, and which I cannot take—I do not want to offend him, so I have brought it back to you. See here for yourself how handsome it is—you will understand that I could not accept such a present.'

She opened the case in her hand, and held out the flashing diamonds towards her.

Mrs. Travers pushed it away from her without a glance; for had she not seen that locket before!

'Presents from my husband to you,' she said with an indignant flush, 'are not things which you should dare to name to me. Keep your diamonds, Mademoiselle Rudenbach—I do not grudge them to you—but spare me at least the insult of your presence in my house.'

And then all at once it flashed upon Gretchen what she meant, and what Cis Travers's wife took her for. With a cry of dismay she sprang towards her.

'Mrs. Travers! what can you mean? What is it possible that you can have thought of me? Your husband has been the kindest of my friends for years—this locket is his wedding present to me—I am going to be married to Mr. Anderson.'

'Going to be married!' repeated Juliet, in astonishment.

'Yes. You have taken me for a dreadfully wicked woman. Is it possible that he has never told you of all his kindness to me, when, without his help, I should have starved?'

Juliet shook her head, feeling more and more bewildered. And then Gretchen sat down near her and told her the whole story of her life, and how Cis had helped her and been kind to her when she was alone and ill and penniless; and how he had been her friend ever since.

She confessed to his wife with timid blushes how at one time she had perhaps thought a little too much about Cis for her own happiness, and how she had gone down to Sotherne to see him married, and had prayed fervent prayers for the happiness of both husband and wife from her hidden corner in the little country church.

But long ago, she said—even on that very day—had such

foolish thoughts been banished from her heart, and Cis had been only to her the dearest and truest friend that any lonely woman could wish for.

‘I wish I had known all this long ago!’ said Juliet, with a sigh. And then, with one of those generous impulses which were natural to her honest character, she went up close to the little pianiste, and took hold of her hands and kissed her. ‘Will you forgive me,’ she said, ‘for having done you a grievous wrong in my heart? Yes, it is quite true that I had thought badly of you; but I can never do so again. If Cis had told me about you long ago, I should have been glad and proud to have been your friend; is it too late for me to become so now?’

‘Dear Mrs. Travers!’ murmured Gretchen, overcome by the sudden kindness of her words.

‘Look here,’ continued Juliet, taking up the velvet case from where she had dropped it a few minutes ago scornfully on the table; ‘you will no longer refuse to accept this locket, will you, if I ask you to take it as a joint gift from myself as well as from Cecil, with all my most sincere good wishes for the happiness of your married life.’

And so Cecil Travers opened the door and found the two women sitting hand in hand together on the sofa, with the glittering diamond locket between them. No wonder that he stood still and stared at so unexpected a sight.

‘I am congratulating Mademoiselle Rudenbach on her engagement,’ said Juliet, looking at her husband not without a spice of malicious delight at his evident confusion. ‘She has been showing me the locket you have given her. I have asked her to let me share in the gift as well as in the good wishes.’

And Cis could find no words wherein to answer her; he could only shake hands with Gretchen in silence, and look unutterably foolish and awkward.

After a few commonplace remarks relative to the weather, Gretchen wisely took her leave, and left the husband and wife together.

‘Cis,’ said Juliet, standing up close to her husband when they were alone,—‘Cis, what a pity it is that you did not tell me what a great friend you were of Miss Rudenbach’s long ago!’

‘Why should I have told you?’ he answered, looking both sheepish and surly, and turning half away from her.

‘Because you might have known me well enough to have been sure that, had you only dealt openly with me, I should not have been jealous, or have made myself disagreeable to you about her. I should have been very glad to have known her better, for I think

she is a charming young woman. But, as it is, you have not dealt fairly by her, for your silence has made me do her and you a grievous injustice. Cis, I have suspected you wrongly, and I beg your pardon.'

'I am glad you are sorry for it,' he answered surlily. Cis had no perception of the generous candour which had prompted her to the avowal of her mistake; he had no responding generosity to meet her half-way in her effort to make things straighter and better between them; he could only revile her with a sort of conceited assumption of superiority which she could not but resent.

'If I was suspicious, it was your own doing,' she answered, with some show of temper. 'Why did you never speak the truth to me? There was no harm in it. Why did you make a mystery of it, and tell me lies about it? Why, Cis,' she added passionately, 'even if you had loved her, and had told me the truth, I could have forgiven you better!'

And then the small heart that there was in the man came up all on a sudden to the surface.

'If I loved her!' he said, with a sort of groan; and sank down into a chair, covering his face with his hands.

With a great pitying sympathy welling up in her own sinful, sorrowing heart, Juliet laid her hand upon her husband's bent head, and kissed his fair ruffled locks very tenderly.

'My poor Cis!' she said, with a great gentleness, 'we have made a dreadful mistake of our lives, haven't we? But somehow or other we have got to bear the consequences of our errors together; let us not make it harder to live out our lives together—for we have both of us much to bear with and to forgive in each other.'

So they kissed one another in silence, and Cis, feeling a little humbled and subdued, went away and left her.

For the first time in his life, some dim perception of the superiority of his wife's character to his own came vaguely over him.

He saw that there had been no feminine spitefulness, no littleness of soul, in her tender, tolerant words to him—she had not been shocked nor disgusted by his half-admission of his affection for Gretchen; no torrent of angry reproaches had poured from her lips. On the contrary, she had seemed at once to understand and to sympathise with him, and to pity his trouble as one who had no thought for herself, but only of him.

For the first time it struck him that possibly she too had suffered, and that her life, as she had said, had been a mistake as well as his own.

He remembered, like a voice out of another life, how, long ago,

she had told him that she had no heart to give to him, and he wondered a little where and how that heart about which he had troubled himself so little had gone. He was, however, too selfish and indolent to disturb himself long about anything that did not concern his own personal comfort, and soon dismissed the subject from his thoughts.

But Juliet was the happier and the better for that little insight into her husband's heart, and for the forbearance and tenderness which it had called out in herself towards him. And so, although Hugh Fleming had already put the waters of the English Channel between himself and her, and she was to see him no more, a little of the blackness and darkness of the heavy clouds that encompassed her had even now been cleared away out of her daily life.

Meanwhile, on that same summer Sunday afternoon, another and very different scene was being acted out under the walnut-tree on the lawn at Broadley House.

An idyl ever graceful and ever new—'the old, old story' that never loses its charm nor its sweetness, however many times in this world's history it is repeated—was being told over again under the fluttering branches of the tree which Flora had once in idle fancy likened to a cathedral aisle, and which became in very truth a shrine to her on this day.

The sunshine glinted down through the aromatic-scented walnut leaves upon her drooping yellow head and sweet downcast face, and fluttered about the white draperies of her simple dress, as Wattie Ellison told her, in strong, manly words, the story of his deep love.

Divested of her fashionable London garments, of her crowd of admirers, of all the coquetry and unreality of her first season's experiences, Flora Travers seemed to have been transformed once again into the simple country maiden whom he had always known and loved; nor had her six weeks of town life been altogether an unmixed evil to her, in that they had taught her to understand her own heart, and to value the sterling affection of the man who, not being blind to her faults, loved her in spite of them, more than all the flattery and adulation that had lately turned her head, but had not been able to spoil her heart.

And presently Wattie took the hand which she had promised him upon his arm, and under the shady lime-tree avenue and out through the yellow cornfields, where the harvest was already beginning, they strolled slowly down to the churchyard in the valley, where scarlet geraniums, and mignonette, and great clusters of white clove carnations had turned poor Georgie's grave into a very wilderness of loveliness; and there, standing up together hand in hand by the white cross round which a crimson rose had been twined

by loving hands, Wattie Ellison told over again to her sister the short, sad story of his first love.

'I am sure that she sees us this day, Flora, and that her blessing is upon us both,' said Wattie, with his simple, childlike faith; and then he stooped down, and Flora's first present from her future husband was a rosebud off her sister's grave.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE END OF IT.

THE scene shifts, and we are at Sotherne again: Sotherne without its roses and with its great woods all stripped and bare, and with the winds and rains of December moaning dismally among its quaint twisted chimneys.

Yet, spite of the dreary autumn weather, Sotherne looks less dismal than it has done for many a day. There are fires in every room, and every window in the long gabled façade is unshuttered, and there are footsteps and voices along its passages from morning till night, for Sotherne's mistress has come back to live in it again.

The house in Grosvenor Street is let, and Mrs. Travers has allowed it to be understood that the home of her fathers is, for the future, to be her head-quarters: at which the neighbourhood generally rejoiced greatly.

A place like Sotherne is a dead loss to a county when it is shut up and uninhabited; and even in Mrs. Blair's long and tranquil reign it was a useless house, as far as sociability is concerned.

But now that Mr. and Mrs. Travers have come to settle down there for the best part of the year, the whole population seems to have brightened and furbished itself up, in its delight to welcome them back. There have been more dinner-parties and dances given this autumn than have been remembered for many years; and great was the joy and excitement when it became known that, as soon as Christmas should be over, two entertainments on a large scale would be held within Sotherne's ancient walls—the first a juvenile dance and Christmas-tree, and the second a full-blown ball to which 'everybody' was to be asked.

Cecil had consented to leave London and to return to Sotherne more willingly than Juliet had thought it possible. For the first few weeks he amused himself at playing the country squire on his wife's property, but after a while he got tired of wandering about the fields with the head-keeper or the bailiff, and making ignorant remarks and suggestions, to which these gentlemen listened in silence, with a respectful smile, but which they did not

dream of acting upon. As he had no country tastes or pursuits, he soon found the time hang heavily on his hands, and sat all day long in the library reading French novels or dozing idly in his chair.

'Would you like to go up to town again, Cis?' said his wife to him more than once; 'I am sorry now we came to Sotherne,—you seem to find it so wearisome; would you like to go back?'

'No; of what use would that be?' he would answer fretfully. 'I am not feeling well—I had just as soon be quiet.'

And something in his peevish answers and pale pinched face made Juliet a little uneasy on his account. There was surely something more than his usual fretfulness and listlessness upon him. Every other day he would go over to Broadley and sit with his father for an hour or so, and often, as she saw them together, Juliet thought that the old Squire—who still rode to hounds in a quiet way and tramped about his fields with his gun on his shoulder and his setter behind him to pick up a brace of pheasants or a couple of rabbits, and who still took a lively interest in his *Field* and his *Sporting Gazette*—was by far the younger man of the two.

Once a week, indeed, Cecil seemed to brighten up a little at the arrival of a weekly letter, which, at Juliet's special request, Mrs. David Anderson never forgot to write to him; and the only thing to which he seemed to look forward with any degree of pleasure or animation, was the prospect of a visit from Gretchen and her husband, which they had promised to pay when the winter should be over. Something more than the despondency of a weak character was in the perpetual fretfulness and depression of spirits to which Cecil Travers had now become habitually subject. Sometimes Juliet thought his health must be breaking up altogether, and sometimes she even feared for his mind. Several times she entreated him to see a doctor; but Cis only shook her off impatiently, and refused to listen to her advice.

Juliet was sitting one afternoon in the little morning room where so many of the scenes of her early life had been acted out. A foreign letter lay on the writing-table in front of her—a letter dated from the shores of the Lake of Como—sweet-scented with the pale double violets which had been enclosed in it, and breathing the fragrance of a thoroughly happy heart in every line.

Never, wrote Flora, were two people more suited to each other than she and her dear Wattie—their days were one succession of unbroken happiness—long days of sunshine and of peace, of wanderings side by side under the chestnut-trees, or of lazy, dreamy hours on the bosom of the blue lake. They were in no hurry to come home; a very fairy-land indeed had the purple mountains and the calm waters of Northern Italy become to them,

Juliet put down the letter with a happy smile. She had done some good there, she felt, and longed a little selfishly for the honeymoon days to be over, and for Wattie and his pretty bride to be at home again and within her reach, where the sight of their happiness might be a perpetual pleasure and interest to her.

Another letter lay beside her, from her stepmother—a letter written in a very different spirit.

Since Juliet had returned to live at Sotherne, she had taken herself, by so doing, completely out of the reach of Mrs. Lamplough's slanderous tongue. Living a quiet life alone with Cis at Sotherne, and Colonel Fleming gone back again to India, it would have been difficult for any female friend, however spitefully inclined, to have spoken harmful words of her. Mrs. Lamplough deemed it wise to ignore all disagreeable and dangerous allusions, and to keep up a brisk correspondence, teeming with flattering words and exaggerated expressions of affection to her 'dearest Juliet.'

In truth, the poor woman could not afford to lose Juliet's friendship, for she was very far from contented with her lot.

Marriage with the Rev. Daniel Lamplough, whom she soon discovered to be a selfish and vulgar domestic tyrant, was anything but the bliss she had at one time expected it to be. Instead of being allowed to have her own way, to give entertainments, to dress fashionably, and to mix in 'aristocratic circles,' as had once been her dream, Mrs. Lamplough found herself a slave, bound hand and foot under a threefold tyranny. Her husband, her sister-in-law, and her sour-visaged maid, seemed to vie with each other to thwart her in every trifle, and to make her life a perfect misery. She hardly knew which of these three personages she hated the most. She could not do the smallest thing, from altering the position of an armchair to dismissing a housemaid, or inviting a friend to dinner, without obtaining permission from one or other, and often from all, of these three potentates: and her worldliness, and sinfulness, and general similitude to the children of the Devil was so often cast in her teeth, and bemoaned over by her persecutors, that she began to detest the very name of religion, and once had the boldness to tell her husband that if the children of Righteousness were all like him, she should infinitely prefer to belong to the family of Sin—a flaring piece of blasphemy, for which she was practically sent to Coventry for more than a week, as her husband refused to speak to her, dined from Monday till Saturday at his club, because he said that he could not sit at meat with so hardened a sinner, groaned aloud when he met her about the house, and, what was the worst penance of all, prayed specially at morning and evening family prayers, before all the servants, that the Almighty might

be pleased to turn the heart of his dear, but sinful and erring wife. A few months of such treatment were sufficient completely to alter and to subdue the unhappy woman; her only pleasure now was in writing long, miserable letters to Juliet, in which she poured out full descriptions of her woes and troubles, and bitter repentance for having ever married again, and often deep sorrow for all her past offences and wrong dealings towards her stepdaughter. Her letters were a very jeremiad of misery; and Juliet, who was generous, although to the last she could never quite believe in anything she said, forgave her freely, and kept up the correspondence. She wrote to her this afternoon a long, cheerful, comforting letter, in which she tried to raise her spirits and make her look more hopefully at all the troubles and worries of her self-chosen life.

And then, as the short winter afternoon began to draw in, and it became almost too dark to see to write, she left the writing-table and went to sit down on a low seat in the window.

Outside, the wind howled and moaned dismally among the naked branches of the trees, the sky was heavy and lowering, the dead leaves fluttered across the lawn in a melancholy way.

It grew darker and darker—one by one the more distant objects in the landscape faded away indistinctly into the greyness of the coming night, till at last only the twisted rose-bushes in the bed just outside the windows gleamed out of the dark background, lit up from the firelight within the room.

Back upon Juliet's memory came the vivid picture of just such another evening long ago, when the winter winds had so howled and moaned, and the dreary darkness had come on and left her sitting there staring out into it with hopeless, tearful eyes. She remembered how, on that other winter evening, there had come the sudden rush of a horse up the avenue and the clanging peal of the bell at the hall-door; and then all had been hurry, and confusion, and dismay, till poor Georgie had been brought into her house to die. Very vividly that deathbed came back to Juliet's mind to-day—the long, sad night-watch, the broken-hearted grief of the old Squire, the painful bustle of the arrival of Wattie and Cecil from town, and then the last scene of all, and the dying girl's last words, when she had extracted that fatal, mistaken promise from herself, and clasped her hand into that of Cecil.

As Juliet thought it all over, slow, sad tears of sorrow for her dead friend, and of regret for her own wasted life, coursed one by one down upon her clasped hands.

With a shudder as of some premonition of evil, she knew not what, she rose from the window as old Higgs suddenly opened the door and stood before her,

‘What is it, Higgs?’ she asked, just in the very words in which she had asked it on that evening long ago.

‘Would you come into the library, ma’am?’ said the old butler, with rather a frightened face. ‘I don’t think that master can be well, for he never moved when I took the lamp in, nor answered me when I asked if he had any letters for the post.’

‘He was asleep,’ answered Juliet, with a strange flutter of terror at her heart as she hastened from the room.

They went into the library together—Juliet first, with her quick, impetuous step, and Higgs following her, trembling all over from head to foot.

Cecil sat upright in his arm-chair, with his back towards the door. A shaded reading-lamp stood on the table in front of him, and flung a bright circle of light just round it, and ghostly shadows about the large room and over its oaken furniture and heavy bookcases. His elbows were on the table in front of him, and his hands both put up shading his face, and before him lay an open writing-case and a half-finished letter upon it. When they came in he never turned in his chair, nor lifted his head, nor dropped his hands, nor moved one single hair’s-breadth in his attitude.

‘Cis, look up! speak to me!’ cried Juliet, with a sharp, ringing voice of horror, as she sprang towards him and touched his shoulder. And then she caught away his hands, and they were cold and stiff; she saw that his face was white and altered, and his eyes wide open and fixed—for in them was the solemn, immovable stare of Death.

For Cecil Travers would never move or look up, nor ever more speak to her again!

Six months have come and gone, and summer is in the land again. It is six months since Cecil Travers was laid beside his sister in Sotherne churchyard—six months, during which the crops have been sown and sprung up, and well-nigh ripened, and the trees have budded and unfolded themselves into midsummer glory, and myriads of summer birds and insects have been ushered into life and happiness, and whole showers of roses have covered Sotherne’s walls with a mantle of beauty.

In these six months Juliet Travers has recovered from the severe illness which the terrible shock of her husband’s sudden death had brought upon her; and now reclines very pale and thin in her deep crape and snowy widow’s cap, on a low couch that has been wheeled out on to the lawn for her, under the elm-trees.

Juliet has mourned for Cecil truly and deeply—not with the mourning of a widow who has lost her supporter and her other self,



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but rather with the gentle grief of a mother over some sickly, wayward child, who has been to her more an occupation and a duty than a comfort or a pleasure.

But to all such mourning, when it does not wrench up the very roots and vitals of our hearts, when it does not alter our nature, nor throw an impenetrable gloom over our whole lives—to all such mourning, when it is sad but not bitter, there comes a natural end. And to Juliet's mourning that end had come; her illness—many days of unconscious delirium, many weeks of utter prostration and weakness too great for thinking—had placed a wide gulf, a blank of vacancy, between herself and the past. A new life is now opening before her, and, with her sense of freedom in the realisation of her widowhood, new hopes and new thoughts are beginning to stir within her.

She had called for her writing materials to be brought out to her on the low table beside her sofa, and is sitting now with a blank sheet of paper before her, her pen idle in her hand, and her eyes fixed with a not unhappy look in them upon the distant blue hills beyond the valley.

'Shall I? dare I?' she is saying over again to herself, whilst a little smile plays about her lips.

Then all on a sudden she pushes aside her writing materials, and rising, with a somewhat weak and trembling step, walks across the lawn into the house through the morning-room window.

And what do you suppose she does there, daughter of Eve as she is?

Why, first she carefully shuts the door, and then she moves away a sofa from before a long mirror that fills up one end of the room, and, with a blush that would not misbecome a maiden of nineteen, she takes off her widow's cap, and surveys her own fair image in the glass.

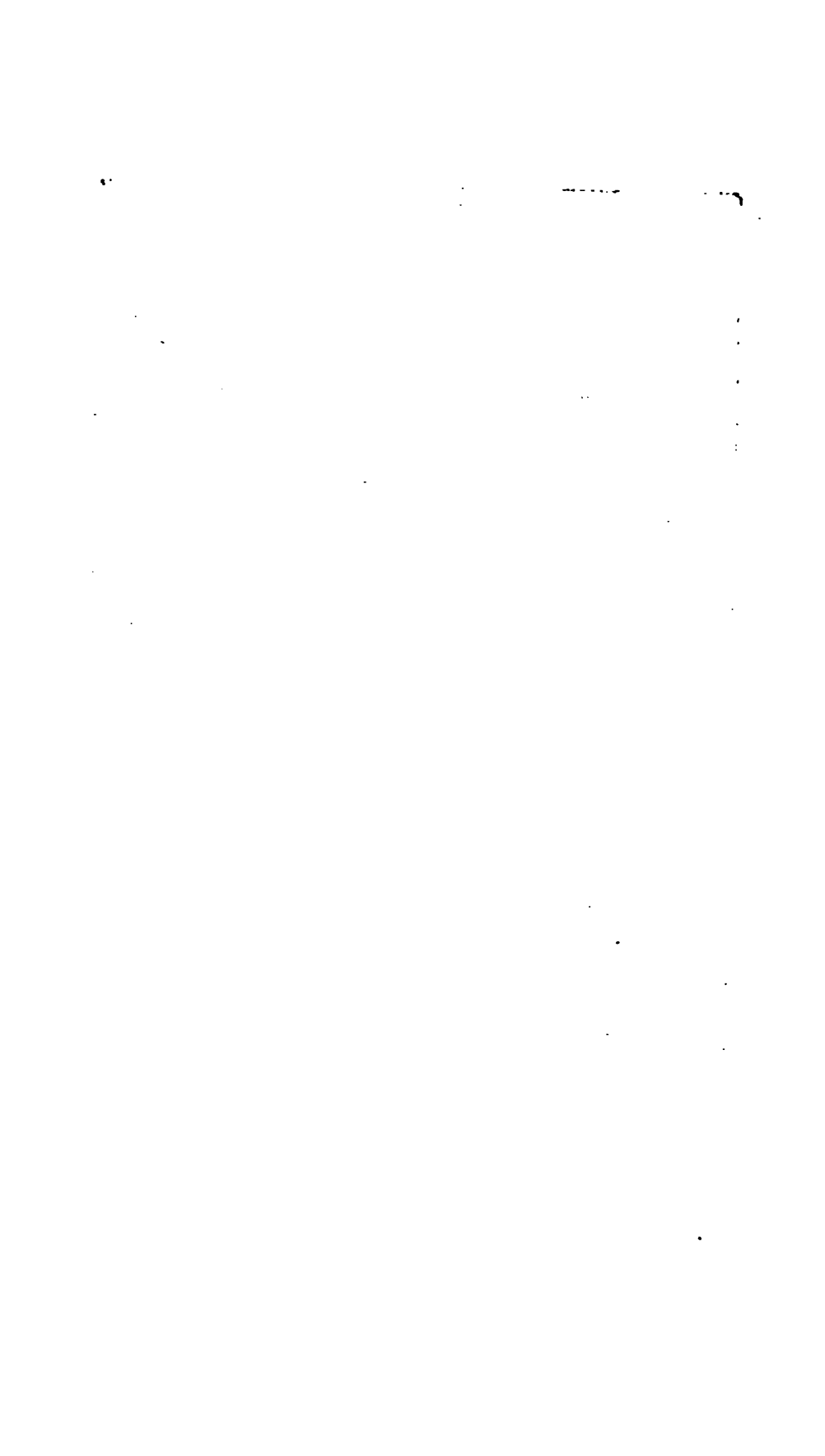
And fair it is, despite her eight-and-twenty years, and despite the saddened lines which suffering and sorrow have traced upon her face.

Her small, dark head, with its crown of polished plaits, is upheld as proudly as of old; her glorious eyes are as deep and as tender—aye, and as full of fire; the rich curve of her lips, the regular outline of her oval face, and her figure,—which, if it is a shade more matronly, is as perfect in its graceful curves,—and as full of subtle charm, as when she first greeted Hugh Fleming standing out upon the doorstep of her home, and he had thought her the loveliest and fairest among English maidens.

Yes; she could acknowledge to herself without vanity that her beauty had not yet left her, that she was still lovely with a loveli-



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ness which, had it ever power to charm and to fascinate him, must do so still.

Then she pinned on the disfiguring cap, and went out and sat down again before her writing-case and began to write rapidly and hastily, with a glad rosy flush coming and going upon her down-bent face.

Why should we waste any more of our lives apart from each other? We have suffered too much and too long to care any longer for the empty conventionalities and the idle gossip of strangers who do not know what our life's story has been. I am prepared very gladly to be called heartless and disrespectful to poor Cecil's memory, and to be a nine days' wonder and scandal to my native county, if only by so doing I may but have you with me again. Dear Hugh; come back to me, for truly I have hungered and thirsted for the sight of you, for too many weary days, to bear absence from you with anything like patience, now that nothing more need stand between us forever. Our lives have been half wasted apart; let us not lose any more of the precious golden days which might be spent together. Darling, come back to me; do not give me the bitter humiliation of being rejected by you for the third time!

Nor does he.

Within a few months of the receipt of that letter, Hugh Fleming is in England again; and when a year is over since Cecil has been carried to his grave, he goes down to Sotherne one morning by the early train, and Juliet, and Mrs. Dawson, and Wattie, and Flora meet him in Sotherne church, just in their everyday clothes, only that Juliet has doffed her crape and wears a simple grey dress, plain as any nun's; the old vicar stands in the chancel with his spectacles on his nose and his open prayer-book in his hand, and a few villagers drop in to look and to wonder; and in this fashion these two, who have loved and suffered so long, are married at last to each other.

Of course, as she had prophesied, it was a nine days' scandal to the neighbourhood, who knew nothing of her life; but to Cecil's family she had told her story, and they forgave her, and were not offended with her for marrying the man she had loved for so long—and that was enough for Juliet.

Another distress to the county was that Colonel and Mrs. Fleming did not go away for a wedding tour, like all other decent and respectable brides and bridegrooms, but that, shaking hands with the little wedding party at the church door, they walked off together arm-in-arm up the hill to the house, where they immediately took up their abode without any sort of outward rejoicing, and with no thought of going away even for a week.

One more glimpse of my heroine before we say good-bye to her.

She is standing on the lawn with her husband a few days after her marriage, and together they are watching a glowing golden winter sunset shedding its glory over the landscape below.

It is just such another evening as the one with which my story

opened, only that, in place of the golden-heated glow of October, it is now the paler but scarcely less lovely light of the finest and warmest of February days.

Crocuses and snowdrops are springing up in the garden-beds around them, and blackbirds and thrushes are awaking after their long winter silence to welcome the coming spring with a very concert of joy.

A new life dawns upon the earth. A new life, too, is opening for the husband and wife. Juliet, with a deep thankfulness in her sobered face, is looking out with solemnly glad eyes over the familiar scene, and Hugh is looking at her face.

'Darling,' he says, drawing her to him with a sudden flash of tenderness, 'it is good to be together at last, is it not? We have suffered so much in the past——'

'Ah, it is more than I deserve!' she interrupts quickly, resting a soft rosy cheek against his own. 'When I think of all the wicked things I once said and thought, can I ever repent enough! We have suffered, Hugh—but I have also sinned!'

'Sweet sinner!' he answers playfully, and lays his lips upon hers. 'Where is the man living who would not forgive to so fair a penitent the sin that was sinned for love's sake!'

(*The End.*)

Eheu Fugaces!

OUR years are sad and very few;
They disappear as morning dew
When summer parches.
In gladdest ditty we can sing,
The burden droning on will ring,
Eheu fugaces!

The world's a sphere made round with woe;
Walk any avenue you know,
Be it oak or larches,
Your ditty, of an old-world ring,
Chimes with the newest fangled thing,
Eheu fugaces!

The course of trouble runs so thick,
That life seems given to the quick
To steal its marches.
Those who stay signal ere they climb
For breakfast, get at supper-time,
Eheu fugaces!

C. A. WARD.

BELGRAVIA

MAY 1877.

By Prop.

BY JAMES PAYN.

CHAPTER I.

ON THE CANAL.

THE time is spring-time—the scene the north of China; or rather that north-eastern portion of the Celestial Empire which the few Europeans who have visited it call North. At the date of which we write, it was a much rarer matter to explore the plains of Keang-Soo, the district lying to the north-west of Shanghae, than even now; it was an excursion which, on the part of the ‘Pak-Quei-Tye’ or ‘Foreign Devils,’ required money, courage, an armed guard, and above all a quietness of demeanour and conduct in the presence of much that was irritating, and more that was ludicrous, which all Europeans, and we fear we must add especially our military fellow-countrymen, do not possess. English officers in particular, who have been accustomed to the natives of India, are apt to get into trouble with those of China; the character of ‘Pandy’ being very different from that of John Chinaman, and especially of John Chinaman on his own dunghill—far inland, where ‘the Barbarians’—that is to say, all persons belonging to civilised communities—are held not only cheap but contemptible. The fine old quotation, *omne ignotum pro magnifico*, is in this instance sadly out of place; for though the Chinese know nothing whatever of our particular ‘tribute-bearing nation,’ except that it consists of men without pig-tails ‘governed by a lady with large feet,’ they do not despise us one whit the less on that account. From the days when the unconscious Lord Macartney went up the Peiho with ‘Ambassador bearing tribute from the country of England’ in Chinese upon his flag, until now, the Celestial People have laboured under false impressions of us which induce the circumstances of what, in domestic scenes at our police courts, is termed ‘aggravation;’ and when

young Englishmen of condition are aggravated, it touches a certain spring in their system which is apt to make them hit out straight from the shoulder. The consequences of this movement, especially in connection with a Mandarin, are exceedingly serious in every part of China except the five treaty ports; and officers of the English army were therefore very seldom given permission to visit the district of Keang-Soo, notwithstanding the abundance of game it was reputed to possess, and the charms of its local scenery.

Nevertheless, of the two Englishmen now seated in the covered boat making its slow way up a tributary of the Cha-Ho (otherwise Imperial Canal) upon this moonlit night in spring, one is in the army. He is the younger of the two travellers, but not sufficiently so to make him, as usual, the more interesting of the two. There is only a year or so of difference in the ages of Ralph Pennicuick and Captain Arthur Conway. But except as to years they have little or nothing in common. The Captain is slight though wiry; his companion would be fair, if the effects of ten years' broiling under Eastern suns could be removed by the application of some of those cosmetics, the action of which we know (by the advertisements) is so unfailing; but then he never uses cosmetics. He has not the money to spare for such luxuries, having to support a wife and child in England, and possessing little more than his pay with which to do it. His face would be comely enough but for a look of care—or rather of the weariness that is the result of care—in his blue eyes: his mouth, notwithstanding the long brown beard, flecked here and there with grey, has a mild and pleasant expression, especially when it smiles: but it smiles rarely: his voice, firm, but gentle almost as a woman's, has a certain melancholy in its tone, such as belongs to men who have missed their mark in life and have no desire to take aim again; who know how it happened quite well, and what has come of it; and who, if not content, at least do not complain. He holds a sketch-book in his hand, to which, while conversing with his companion, he transfers, from time to time, some picturesque or curious object on the canal bank. He is a man of considerable accomplishments, as the phrase goes, though they have hitherto been of no practical advantage to him. He can catch a likeness, and place it on paper in a few strokes; as a young man—that is to say, some twenty years ago, for he is now three-and-forty—he could sing a song with much feeling and expression; but his singing days have long been over. He has a genuine talent for languages, and, having now resided some three years in the 'crockery shop,' as his companion calls the 'Flowery Land,' can make himself understood in Chinese. Had Captain Arthur Conway possessed a friend suffi-

ciently sympathetic (which he does not) to enquire what he had done with his life and opportunities in the world, he would have replied, 'Wasted myself.' The general opinion of his brother-officers was correct, when they remarked to one another, as they had occasionally done, that 'Conway had missed his tip.'

The general opinion of those who knew Ralph Pennicuick was of quite the contrary kind. He had not 'missed his tip,' if that means any aim whatever to which he had at any time directed his energies. He had always had all he wanted, or almost all; partly, it is true, because his wants had been of a material sort, with which a large fortune inherited when he came of age had always supplied him; but also because of his indomitable will. His wish was as much a law to him as that of his Imperial Majesty the Son of Heaven and Vice-Regent of the Universe, in whose dominions he was now travelling for his own pleasure. A disciple of Lavater would have judged as much from Pennicuick's mouth, the firmness of which, set in its massive jaw, reminded you of the Nineveh marbles; it was not the jaw alone, however, which associated itself with those steadfast faces of the despots of old, but the beard of inky blackness which, flowing broadly down from his dark face, was clubbed towards the ends and curled upwards as hair appears to have done in Nineveh, alike with bulls and men. Of course Pennicuick was much respected for this attribute—by which I mean his will and not his beard, though *that* too he used to say had its attractions for the fair sex—but it did not make him beloved of men. He was not a man to get his name abbreviated from familiarity or affection, but it was abbreviated nevertheless. He was called 'Steel Pen,' and 'Hard Pen,' from his decisiveness of character; and 'Black Beard,' not so much from his beard as from the characteristics he had in common with the famous pirate of that name. But these things were only said behind his back, while Conway was always 'Connie' even with the youngest ensign, and, despite his poverty and want of animal spirits, one of the most popular men in his regiment. Pennicuick would have been popular too, perhaps, if he would have taken the trouble to be so, and even as it was his company was sought after by both sexes. For women love a tyrant, and men (who are also cowards in their way) have always a welcome for those who have a sharp tongue, a ready sword, and a large rent-roll.

These two men had been at College together, where they had both been their own masters and enjoyed themselves; only the one had lived on his income, and indeed within it, while the other had made a hole in his small capital. They had both married for love (after their several fashions), but Pennicuick with the more discre-

tion. His wife died in giving birth to her first child—a son—and left her husband with twice the fortune he had possessed before: while Conway's wife had brought him little (or what seemed little to a man of his habits) beyond a daughter, to keep whom and her it had been necessary for him for the last ten years to exile himself from England. This at least was the view he himself took of it (though always, as I have said, without complaint); but, as a matter of fact, he had not been prudent at any time, and had both spent and lost money in pursuit of pleasure and gain. His friends said that he had never been anybody's enemy but his own; but his wife, who was very plain-spoken, had not always endorsed that sentiment. She had occasionally even expressed a contrary one, a circumstance which had perhaps had its influence in keeping them apart. Pennicuick, who was an idle man, had always kept up his acquaintance with Conway—indeed, Mrs. Conway had been a second mother to his boy at a time when he sorely needed maternal solicitude—and having exhausted the pleasures of Town, and even of Europe, he had come out to China for a few months in search of his friend and new excitements. Hong Kong and Shanghai had soon been exhausted in their turn, and hence this expedition into the interior, the expenses of which were solely defrayed out of his own pocket; Conway had had nothing to procure but leave of absence from his regiment, which was stationed at the latter city. The position of being 'franked' by another man is always a delicate if not an absolutely disagreeable one, unless that man is indeed one's friend; his merely calling himself so having little to do with the matter: and perhaps in the present case that complete though tacit understanding—the total absence of the general principle of 'give and take'—which underlies all genuine friendship was wanting. On the other hand, the sense of obligation on Conway's part was greatly lessened by the fact that Pennicuick could have got no one else to accompany him on such a tour, or, even if he could, would probably not have accepted such companionship. There was just enough consciousness of dependence to cause the poorer man to assert himself (which under ordinary circumstances he never did), and to offer an opinion, and stick to it, which he would have been otherwise too indolent to express. Pennicuick, who perceived everything that had the smallest reference to himself, understood this thoroughly, and to do him justice liked the other's society all the better for it.

He was just now enjoying it particularly, as he leant back in the centre compartment of the boat, with a very large cigar in his mouth, or in his fingers, according to whether he was the listener or the spokesman. In the prow were the few Chinese soldiers

who formed their guard, commanded by Fu-chow their captain; in the stern were the Chinese boatmen, who worked the vessel in the usual fashion by sculls upon a pivot, and from which labour they never ceased. Except for the movement of the oars, and an occasional snore from the pigtailed warriors who were all asleep, there was no sound to interrupt the talk of the two friends.

'They have been at it now for two whole days and nights,' said Conway, 'and are going on, as fresh as ever. It is perfectly marvellous.'

'That men should snore so,' put in Pennicuick gravely: 'I quite agree with you.'

'I mean that men should row so. I saw them at dinner-time eating rice with their chopsticks, which even now I find an almost impossible feat, and still rowing.'

'They go deuced slow,' observed the other, in a tone of deprecation.

'Nevertheless, they will make a boat go farther in twenty-four hours than our best English watermen.'

'Possibly: mules and camels will go farther than the horse, and yet the horse is the superior animal. The Chinaman is a brute inferior to all the three.'

'That is not the opinion of those who are best acquainted with him.'

'You mean that is not the opinion they express, my dear fellow. Men always praise the people they are compelled to have to do with, to excuse their own necessity. A step farther, and we find them cracking up the country they belong to, no matter how absurd may be the boast. You don't suppose any Scotchman, for example, who sings "*Scots wha hae*," and all the rest of it, would be a Scotchman if he could help it?'

'Upon my life, I think some of them would,' said Conway, smiling; for it was well known that Pennicuick was himself of Scotch descent.

'No, no; there are no mad Scotchmen. Now these Chinese are all mad; and their madness takes the most contemptible form, that of imbecility. They are like men in their second childhood, when they are like men at all. You will tell me they invented gunpowder—though I believe it was nothing but gunpowder tea—but what use do they make of it, except to fill crackers wherewith to please their gods? you will also tell me they invented printing, which however nobody, including themselves, has yet been able to read. What has come of all this early ingenuity? They are like precocious children with immense heads, from which sanguine persons augur intelligence, but which turns

out to be water on the brain. It is astonishing to me that a man of your intelligence does not see through the shallow motives which induce folks to preach up barbarism all over the world. A man goes to St. Petersburg, and because he finds the nobles and the military talking French—which is a positive necessity of the case—avers that it is a second Paris.'

'You think that Paris, then, is the focus of civilisation, do you?' answered Conway, who was busy pencilling in his sketch-book a tall bridge, in a mulberry plantation, through which they were about to slide.

'Certainly not: the man who says that is only not quite such a fool as the other. The civilisation of Paris is but skin-deep. It is, I grant, the Paradise of the Cheap Tripper; but its very luxuries and pleasures—which are its real attractions—can all be procured in London by one who knows where to look, and can afford to pay for them. Even in vice, of which it flatters itself it has the monopoly, it is by no means without rivals.'

'You speak with authority, no doubt,' said Conway drily.

'Of course; *experto crede*. I was about to say that your Chinese, for example, run the Parisians very close in this respect—in the drawing of iniquity with a cart-rope; which I remark is tacitly taken, if not absolutely instanced by observers, as a proof of their intelligence.'

'They are certainly most abominably vicious, and, what is worse, inordinately cruel,' assented Conway.

'The two things are not so far apart as is supposed,' observed Pennicuick with the air of a philosopher. 'Do you remember the prison where we saw the Englishman convicted of half-a-dozen brutal murders, and yet pitied him?'

'Can I ever forget it?' answered Conway with a quick shudder.

'Do you remember the prisoners clenched together by a nail through their hands, because there happened to be a deficiency of handcuffs; and the wretch that was starved to death in the *cangue*, with his fellow-countrymen keeping guard over him and enjoying it: how even the best off among them clamoured to us like wild beasts, to give them food?'

'Pray desist, Pennicuick,' cried the other, with a movement of disgust. 'Why do you dwell upon such hideous things?'

'Because I hate cant, and more especially in the mouth of an honest man. If these wretches'—he jerked his left hand to the prow, and then to the stern—'are to be called human, so much the worse for humanity.'

'Gaolers and prisoners do not make a nation, Pennicuick. Yonder boatmen are good fellows enough, I dare say, and for that

matter the soldiers too: they work for their families, love their wives and children, and though, as you say, like babies, they cry when you strike them, are not all cowards. I think Fu-chow yonder, for example, behaved very pluckily—and you must allow me to add very properly—when you chucked his daughter under the chin yesterday.’

‘How the deuce was I to know it *was* his daughter?’ enquired the other sullenly.

‘I don’t think that is quite the point; and though, since you say so, I am bound to believe you meant no offence, the man was bound to resent it.’

‘Still, but for you, it would have been unlucky for the man,’ answered Pennicuick grimly; ‘for I should certainly have wiped him out. There would have been three hundred and fifty millions of Celestials *minus one* by this time.’

‘Then that would have been unlucky for you, my friend, for there would certainly have been two Englishmen *minus one*, or perhaps we should both have been wiped out. As it is, you have made the man your enemy, which under the circumstances—especially as he is a nephew of a Mandarin—is, to say the least of it, injudicious.’

‘I didn’t know he was the nephew of a Mandarin,’ said Pennicuick, in a tone of mock penitence. ‘I have a very great regard for the Mandarins. Since Humbug must be King, let us revere his High-priest. I don’t think anything ever tickled me so much as seeing that high functionary at Yang-chin “saving the sun” during the eclipse. His capers, and his incense; his prostrations, and his knocking his hairless head upon the ground nine times, all to preserve the great source of light from being devoured by a monster, was a waste of energy which really bordered on the sublime. The ceremony has moreover the immense advantage over the proceedings of nature that it is always completely successful. These “crocks” indeed never own themselves beaten. When they pray for fine weather, and it doesn’t come, they put their gods out in the rain to see how *they* like it: whereas *our* archbishops and bishops, with a total absence of spirit, go on praying, till (very literally) “all’s blue,” and adopt no measure of retaliation whatever. I am afraid, however, I am shocking your prejudices. You are a believer in the popular superstition?’

‘I am not a disbeliever in it,’ answered Conway gravely.

‘Is it possible? Then even these “crocks” have the advantage over you. They have no apprehension that after their lives here are ended—with its prisons, and *cangues*, and tyranny of all kinds—they are doomed to eternal misery. They have no fear of

death whatever: any man who is condemned to die can for a five-pound note—and another to “square” the Mandarin—get some one else to die for him. I have seen such a substitute kneel down, with a cigarette in his mouth, for the executioner to strike his head off.

‘I should be no more afraid to die than he, Pennicwick,’ answered Conway slowly.

‘Physically, of course not: you have given your proofs to the contrary, my good fellow. But psychologically you would imagine you ran a risk.’

‘Perhaps: yet, on my word,’ answered Conway, ‘but for my wife and Nelly, I would almost chance it. They wouldn’t miss my company, it’s true,’ added he bitterly; ‘but, you see, I can’t afford to die just yet, for their sakes.’

‘Come, come, Conway: you must not talk like that. You are a young man still: younger than I. There are years of life before you yet: and where there’s life there’s hope; the chances of promotion, a stroke of luck at the races——’

‘You said you hated cant, just now,’ interrupted Conway. ‘I entertain a similar dislike. Let us drop this subject.’

‘By all means. And let us also drop asleep if we can. It must be nearly morning. Good night, old fellow.’

‘Good night,’ answered Conway gently.

In a few minutes his companion had his wish: the moonlight glinted in upon his massive features, firmer and sterner than ever in their repose. But Conway slept not. He continued to gaze dreamily forth, on bridge and joss-house; on the distant hills covered with juniper and pine; on the plantations with their running streams, half natural, half artificial, that fringed the banks. But though he saw them with his outward eyes he recked not of them. His thoughts were far away, and it was long before slumber visited him. Even then he did not sleep for long. His dreams were weird and monstrous; they pictured him, with his present companion, sailing up a river, but not in China: they were in Egypt on the Nile, where indeed he had once been. An immense crocodile had clambered into their boat, and opened its mouth to swallow Pennicwick; he would have struck at it to aid his friend, but the creature turned and spoke: ‘Beware, rash man; I am the sacred Dragon of China;’ and the next instant his jaws had closed upon his victim with a horrid clash. The noise awoke him with a start: it was broad daylight; his companion was sleeping tranquilly upon the opposite bench, unconscious as it seemed even of dreams; but another face was in the little cabin, projected over the bunk that divided it from the forepart of the vessel, and peering between the curtains above it: a ruddy, hairless face, with

twinkling eyes that ordinarily expressed good humour, but which now, fierce and glittering, fixed themselves on Pennicuick's face with a look of fiendish malice. Presently a hand was thrust noiselessly through the curtains, and touched a bruise upon the ruddy face; it was but a momentary action, but the pantomime was perfect: what it said was, 'White devil, you shall suffer for this!' So menacing was this expression indeed that, fearing an immediate onslaught on his friend, Conway leapt to his feet. In that instant the face had withdrawn like a flash of lightning. When Conway in his turn looked into the next compartment, the half-dozen soldiers who were his servants were all sunk in slumber, while to all appearance Fu-chow, their captain, was as fast asleep as the rest. So perfect indeed was the simulation of repose—if simulation it was—that Conway doubted whether his senses had not deceived him; whether the alligator of the Nile and the menacing face of Fu-chow had not been part and parcel of the same vision. But if so, it was curious that he should have seen the man point to his cheek, where the effects of the blow by which Pennicuick had felled him on the previous day were still plainly visible.

Upon the whole, Conway judged it best to make no stir about the matter.

CHAPTER II.

A BREEZE IN THE BOAT.

THE morning was a superb one even for spring-time in China, which, unlike that of India, (which has been well described as a hot winter,) or the same cheerless season in England, is like the spring of the Poets. Moreover, it is not a liar pretending to be the herald of summer, and suddenly throwing off the mask in a snow-storm. It is bright and fresh and genial; the air, though cool, being singularly soft; while the green of the foliage and herbage is beyond measure beautiful. The flower-beds also, from being, as botanists tell us, very prominently developed in autumn, burst into bloom at the first dawn of spring, so that the jessamine (which grows in great abundance in the district of which we speak) puts forth its yellow even above the snow. No snow, however, save upon the distant hill-tops, was visible to Conway's eyes that morning; the whole earth blushed like a garden, and made the air one perfume. Lilacs and pink Judas-trees grew luxuriantly upon the banks; and 'out-of-doors, in front of the gay little country houses, were rows of striped camellias. Most beautiful of all, perhaps, were the trees like almond-trees, but bearing gorgeous double blossoms as large as roses, which covered the country as plenteously as May

hawthorn in England—and would in time become peaches. Although, as we have said, there was no snow in the valleys, immense banks of azaleas supplied its place to the ravished eye, while, lest this prodigal show of blossom should still fail to give an idea of nature's wealth, the exquisite wild rose hung in festoons, as though it were some gala day, from every tree. In Arthur Conway the eye was still alive to natural beauties, but the soul, which had once also been alive to them, was dead. For however matters may be with us in another world, in this one the soul is! alas, with most of us, the first of our attributes to die. As we grow old, its sensations become more and more difficult to excite, and if trouble or disappointment have laid heavy hands upon us, this happens early—sometimes ere middle age. What are sights and smells, nay, all the treasures of nature, to one whose mind is occupied with regrets for the past, or with anxieties for the future? There was even a sort of sadness for the present spectator in all this splendour, because he felt the loss of that which would have made it glorious. As for Pennicuick, it was certainly not worth while to awaken *him*, to look at trees and flowers, which after all would be seen later in the day when he had had his sleep out. But presently the silent highway upon which they were journeying became alive with boats of all shapes and sizes, full of people, while the paved walks upon each side—or towing-path as it would be called in England, where horses are the only beasts of burden—grew almost as populous as the banks of Thames during the University Race. Then Conway awoke that student of humanity Ralph Pennicuick.

‘Good Heavens, what a lot of crocks!’ was his ejaculation ere he plunged his head and face into the canal—the only means of ablution that offered itself. ‘What is it all about, Connie?’

‘They are pilgrims bound for the shrine up yonder,’ explained Conway, pointing to a mountain in the foreground, up which a winding road led to a native temple.

‘They are deuced pretty pilgrims, some of them,’ observed Pennicuick, scanning approvingly the female occupants of the boats, which their superior speed (for they had several rowers) caused them to overtake one by one. The Celestial ladies, thus alluded to, hung their heads beneath the bold glance of the barbarian, and looked as though they had never been so stared at before: but directly the ‘white devils’ boat had passed they broke out into a merry laugh, which seemed to imply that they had got over the shock, and even forgiven him. They were by no means in what in Europe is understood to be pilgrims’ weeds: their dresses were silks and satins, and crapes of brightest colours, but especially blue. Sitting *still*, they looked like other women, but for their almond eyes;

when they rose and disembarked, however, as many did, the manner in which they tottered across the plank from boat to bank was a spectacle which moved Pennicuick to cynical mirth.

‘Look at their tooticums, Connie: their dear little toes all cramped together into a club-foot.’

‘Hush, Pen, hush. They know what makes you laugh; and it is no laughing matter for them, poor creatures. From six years of age their lives have been made miserable by this iron law of fashion.’

‘But why the deuce do they do it?’

‘Why do English ladies wear crinoline? There was an Empress of China named Tak-ki who had club-feet and set the fashion. It is, at all events, the only sign of caste in the country, which is surely creditable. The common people do not trouble themselves to go in for it: indeed, no heavy work can be done under such conditions. These ladies therefore, we may be sure, all belong to the genteel classes.’

‘It adds, if not a cubit, several inches to their stature,’ observed Pennicuick critically.

‘Yes: they all stand on tiptoe as it were, though their toes are turned under them. If they don’t do it, they cannot aspire to marry into respectable or literary families.’

‘That “literary” and “respectable” should be convertible terms seems the most curious thing of all,’ remarked Pennicuick.

‘To us, no doubt: but this is the land of literature. The very printed character is held so sacred that Government makes arrangements for picking up all bits of paper, and even broken crockery that has letters upon it.’

‘You charm me more and more with every detail of this intelligent race, Connie. Is it true that ten thousand candidates voluntarily submit themselves at every season to a competitive examination?’

‘No doubt: the aspirants, too, are of all ages. I knew an old gentleman of eighty (he had been plucked a good many times, as you may guess) who went up to be examined from Shanghae last year, and died under the operation. He had to take up six books of Confucius.’

‘Capital name, Confucius,’ remarked Pennicuick drily. ‘Everything here tends in that direction. These hobbling women, these pigtailed men, whose ancestors knew so many things before we knew anything, but who still believe in—what is their god’s name?’

‘Ay-tum-foo,’ interpolated Conway.

‘Just so, in a Tom-fool in a temple. The whole thing looks

like an allegory, doesn't it?—the temple of Fame, or something, with its thousands of worshippers, winding up the toilsome path. I'm hanged if I don't think the very hill is out of perspective.'

The effect of the scene was really very curious, and gave an impression not wholly natural. The temple was perched upon the very top of the mountain; the paths were cut in zigzag with mathematical precision, and stiffness and formality everywhere pervaded the sacred scene.

'I've seen it all somewhere before,' continued Pennicuick, 'but I can't tell where. Oh, now I've got it. It's like a blessed Valentine, only instead of the church there is the temple, and instead of the parson there is the priest, and instead of the Happy Couple there are these miserable sinners. Why should we not pay our respects to Ay-tom-fool, like the rest of them?'

'By all means, if you like. I will tell Fu-chow to moor the boat.'

'Do: and as you wish to propitiate the beggar, tell him also we are about to become converts to his religion.'

At the mention of his name by Conway, Captain Fu-chow had presented his flat round face between the curtains: it looked so innocent and so subservient—although out of China one might have thought the subservience a little over-done—that it was impossible to reconcile it with the look of malignant hate that it had worn—or had seemed to wear—an hour or so before.

'Joss Chin-chin topside galow,' said Conway. Fu-chow cast a rapid glance in the direction of the temple, and then towards Pennicuick.

'Him talkey largey, talkey strong,' replied he doubtfully.

'What is the pippin-faced idiot saying about me?' enquired Pennicuick angrily. It was disagreeable to him to hear Chinese, because he could not understand it: but the Pidgeon English which Fu-chow insisted on talking even to Conway, who could speak the native tongue—just as one's French or German nurse *will* talk broken English in preference to her own language—was hateful to him.

'Fu-chow is afraid of our going to the temple because you express yourself so strongly upon serious subjects, and generally with disrespect. He is quite right to be careful.'

'Tell him I adore Tom-fool—or, at least, am about to do so—and will not breathe a word to his disadvantage; and when you have quieted his religious scruples, ask him about breakfast.'

'Catchery some chow-chow, chop-chop,' said Conway; whereupon Fu-chow nodded intelligently and withdrew.

'Let us have the chops first, Connie,' said Pennicuick, 'and the chow-chow, which I suppose means fish, when he has caught it.'

'"Chow-chow" is not fish, but food,' explained Conway, laughing; 'and "chop-chop" only means directly: by the time it is ready we shall be opposite the temple, and can drop the anchor.'

'By jingo!' exclaimed Pennicuick, pointing to the bank, along which some ladies and children were being carried, not in a palanquin, but in separate little baskets swung from a long bamboo.

'That's a family equipage,' explained Conway. 'Little Milburn of ours says that when a Chinese woman is carried she is an air-plant; but when she walks she's orchid: he is the wit of the regiment.'

'I congratulate the regiment,' said Pennicuick drily; for, like many clever fellows, he did not much appreciate other people's jokes. 'Confucius, look how they shake hands!'

Some Chinese neighbours on the bank were exchanging a morning greeting, which they accomplished by shaking *their own* hands. Each placed the fingers of one hand over the fist of the other, so that the thumbs met, and then, standing a few feet apart, raised his hands gently up and down in front of his breast.

'Of course it looks ridiculous to us,' said Conway. 'But, on the other hand, they don't slobber one another like the French and Germans. The women do not even kiss the women.'

'Then they are ignorant of the niceties of expression in hate and envy,' observed Pennicuick. 'To see a woman kiss a woman whom she doesn't like—and she generally doesn't—is the very height of civilisation. But here comes the chop-chop.'

'Excuse me, it is the chow-chow,' said Conway, laughing. 'Here are fish, fowl, pork, and potato-rice. Veal and mutton are never seen, you know.'

'Of course not, because you expect them. Take away these infernal chopsticks, will you!'

This last remark was addressed to the Chinese attendant to whose culinary skill they were indebted for the dainties he had just set before them; and it seemed to puzzle him immensely.

'Too muchey curio,' murmured he to Conway, who could use the chopsticks with some skill. 'Too muchey bobbery: me plenty fear.'

'What the deuce does the creature mean, Connie?' The speaker's voice was so full of ire, that the 'creature' had bolted over the bunk like a deer.

'He means that you are much too excited to be sane; that you are apt to kick up a row about nothing at all; and that your con-

duct is calculated to alarm all peaceable people. It seems to me that he has described your character very graphically.'

'It seems to me that when I come to understand these graphic people's lingo, it will be the worse for them,' said Pennicwick, sullenly.

'Well, you had better wait till you get back to Shanghae—or, better still, to England—and then you can be as ill-natured as you please—with safety.'

'I don't understand you, Conway. Are these miserable wretches all your clients, that I am bound to be on my best behaviour to them? I shall behave just as I please, with your good leave.'

'Which you will not have.'

'Why?'

'Because you are sure to behave badly. You are a man of the world, if ever there was one; and yet you cannot put up with anyone's peculiarities but your own. We are come here to enjoy ourselves, not to get into any confounded row. If you mean to show temper about every little thing, I shall be sorry I agreed to come with you.'

Pennicwick swallowed something in his throat which, perhaps, was his temper, for his face at once lost its truculent expression.

'I certainly had no intention of making myself disagreeable to you, my dear fellow. You ought to know me better.'

'I quite understand that, Pennicwick; but, unfortunately, your making yourself disagreeable to others has, under the circumstances, a reflex action on myself. If you turn into ridicule, or put in bodily fear, every Celestial we chance to come across—we are likely to have a hot time of it.'

'I confess that I despise tomfoolery and detest extortion,' observed Pennicwick curtly.

'And yet you have sense enough to make allowances for the one and wealth enough to afford the other. You are not a missionary that you should be angry with these poor people because they worship Mumbo-Jumbo: and if Fu-chow does cheat you out of a thousand "cash," it is after all only twopence halfpenny.'

To this Pennicwick answered not a word. The reply that came to the tip of his tongue was that it was all very well for Conway not to care about Fu-chow's little embezzlements, since it was not his purse that defrayed them: but he restrained himself. He knew very well, had the position of his companion and himself been reversed, that the other would have been freer with his purse-strings. Pennicwick spent large sums upon his pleasures, but not a shilling more than was necessary to make them completely enjoyable. He was careful with his money, if not absolutely close; and

for this Conway, he knew, rather despised him. He did not understand, however, that his friend hated still more his brusque and bullying ways with the poor Celestials. He was himself a man absolutely indifferent to the feelings of his inferiors, and he did not comprehend that there are natures which resent slights and insults to the poor and dependent almost as much as if they were offered to themselves. Conway had his own faults, plenty of them: but they did not tend in the same direction as those of his companion, which after all were not so marked to others as they appeared to be in his eyes. Pennicuick was arrogant, and somewhat grudging expense; but he was neither a bully nor a miser. It would not have been just to call him cruel. But there was a certain grimness about him, not unmixed with humour, such as is commonly seen in the schoolboy 'ere he grows to pity,' and is an occasional attribute of hard and headstrong men who have good animal spirits.

CHAPTER III.

THE JOSS-HOUSE.

THERE is one great virtue about the Chinese religion which, in addition to its amazing ludicrousness, makes it attractive to the outsider. It is, externally at least, always allied with the picturesque. They build their temples in the most lovely spots that can be selected, and, though their taste is tawdry, it would revolt at the downright ugliness and want of symmetry that distinguish our own Bethels. The temple of Ay-tum-foo, for example, was, as we have said, placed on a hill-top, commanding such exquisite scenery as well might lead human thought from nature up to nature's God. That it had quite a contrary effect upon the Chinese pilgrim was an idiosyncrasy. It led him to a certain point, namely the top of a hill—and then into the joss-house, at whose entrance gate sat a wooden lady about sixty feet high, with a perpetual smile upon her face, supposed to be provoked by the vanities of the world. Her august title was Mi-leh-fu (the Guardian); but as an immense pot of incense, to which every visitor contributed a stick or two, dispersed odours all around her, an irreverent spirit might have termed her Millefleurs. That was the name Ralph Pennicuick gave her, directly he had seen and sniffed. She was very handsomely painted and gilded, and had a hole between her shoulder-blades through which she was supplied with artificial entrails.

The Chinese, it is said, with reference to their indifference to human suffering, have no bowels; but that is not the case with their

deities. The gods of the Buddhist Olympus are nothing without them, which are supposed to represent the living spirit; they generally consist of silver representations of the head and other internal parts of the anatomy, with pearls and precious stones dropped in by the well-to-do people; and during certain international treaties, the British officer, who has improved his mind by the study of native customs, has been known to reap the fruits of it, by taking advantage of the above circumstance. A primrose by a river's brink is to a very large class of persons but a yellow primrose; and a wooden idol covered with gold leaf has similarly nothing but its external charms to recommend him to the ignorant observer. But to minds less superficial, and given to look into things, he may turn up things.

Our two friends found little difficulty in reaching the presence of this goddess, who, after all, only kept the door of the temple) beyond the steepness of the ascent. The crowds of worshippers were much too bent upon their pious object to pay that attention to the strange visitors which is generally given to European strangers. For once, the natives excited far more interest in the latter than did the latter in them. The occasion, indeed, was a supreme one, being Bodhi's birthday; and all the neighbourhood—or certainly every woman—the rich in sedans, the poor on foot, were on their way to do honour to his shrine. The broad paved paths were covered with them, so that progression was not easy; and especially since the more devout would suddenly prostrate themselves at every altar place with the same consequences that follow the same feat of the clown in our pantomimes: if you were not very careful, you fell over them. All the women had baskets containing candles, incense sticks about a foot long with a kind of sawdust paste at the top to make a respectable volume of smoke, and were provided with strings of cash—very 'petty cash' indeed—to buy prayers with of the priest. Each too young or old had a sort of alpenstock to help him up the hill. What was a much less pleasant sight was the swarm of beggars with every form of disease, who besought the passengers to 'do good deeds' with a particular reference to their own case. The Englishmen were very larval—Pemberton, perhaps, from the recollection of his friend's remark upon his weakness in the direction of economy: for he disliked almsgiving on principle, and had a strong conviction that the sightless eyes, the swollen and maimed limbs, and even the deficiency of them, were all parts of a huge priestly imposture. The habit of indiscriminate charity is greatly insisted upon by the disciples of Bodhi, and the generosity of the two strangers gained them much popularity, which a peep at the back of the brain of at least one of

them would have considerably impaired. At the gate of the temple—and indeed for the last half-mile of the way up—stalls were erected for the sale of candles, joss sticks, and sycee paper, used in worship; and as it was shrewdly supposed that the ‘white devils’ were wanting even in these simplest elements of religion, they had been much importuned to buy them; and here again Pennicuick had done his duty.

‘Pray take notice of my exemplary conduct, Connie,’ observed he when they had reached the top of the hill; ‘and also that I have distributed at least fourpence among forty scoundrels.’

‘Your behaviour is admirable, Pennicuick; but take care to keep it up in the temple.’ A hint that had been called forth by the abrupt transformation of *Mi-leh-fa* into *Millefleurs*.

‘She is the reverse of the proverb “All is not gold that glitters,”’ Connie, whispered Pennicuick, with reference to her interior; ‘for though she is but gold leaf outside, she has gold fruit within her. The first row you have with those crocks, you will come here to practise anatomy, I reckon.’

‘Hush, Pennicuick, hush: or some folks will be practising vivisection on you.’

A very unpleasant-looking priest, quite bald, and dreadfully burnt about his head—marks of great merit—was regarding his companion with an air which might or might not be Buddhist, but was certainly very unchristian. His duties were apparently similar to those of a verger, since his brethren were all actively engaged in their spiritual calling—that is to say, in chanting, in prostrations, in beating drums, and bells, and balls of wood, or in taking the petty cash from the ladies. In exchange for it they gave what may be called ‘drafts from Hades, payable to Bearer:’ the idea being that everybody who comes into the world has contracted debts during his previous transmigration, which will have to be settled (at compound interest) during the next, unless discharged in this, for which these self-appointed ecclesiastical commissioners kindly undertake to arrange. It is rather a less direct system than that of Peter’s Pence, but has the same practical effect. Conway explained all these matters in a low voice to his companion, while maintaining a sufficiently reverent air.

‘Why do the women all hum the musical gamut,’ enquired Pennicuick, “Do, re, mi, fa”?’

‘Hush; it is nothing of the kind. They are saying “*Na mi o mi tah fuh*,” which is their great shibboleth. These drafts the priests sell have had those excellent monosyllables chanted over them many thousand times: hence their extraordinary value.’

‘But what are they doing with those chopsticks, since they have no rice?’

‘They are not chopsticks: you will observe that they are rounded on one side and flat on the other. The fair petitioners chuck them into the air, in the hope that they will come down on the flat side, in which case their prayers will be granted; but as the rounded side is the heavier, the augury is generally the other way.’

‘Heads I lose, tails you win,’ commented Pennicuick.

‘Just so: the laws of gravitation are against the poor creatures. Here is a pilgrim with a better plan; in that hollow bamboo he has a bundle of sticks, each with a written character upon it, and he will be prosperous or the reverse, according to the stick that is first shaken out.’

‘I would practise that in the seclusion of my own apartments,’ observed Pennicuick; ‘and after a few goes at it, I’ll bet a guinea I’d shake the right stick out first.’

‘Unfortunately, you don’t know which *is* the right one. The priest interprets it for you; he has a sort of Fortune-telling book which gives the meaning of the lettered sticks, and, you see, these good people are not always satisfied with his decision. They ask their neighbours what *they* think about it, and whether the respected ecclesiastic may not have made some mistake.’

‘They chatter worse than people used to do in church in my young days, unless it’s ALL “Do, re, mi, fa”!’

‘You are right. They repeat, perhaps a thousand times over, their monosyllabic shibboleth, but continue to keep up a conversation nevertheless. “*Na mi o mi ta fuh.* How is your good man? Do you like your new work? That girl’s feet were not made so small without pinching; thank Heaven, *our* family were all born so. *Na mi o mi ta fuh.*”’

‘I can scarcely hear half you say,’ said Pennicuick. ‘What an infernal row those drums and bells make!’ Besides the smaller instruments that kept up a perpetual concert within the building, an immense drum was being struck at intervals outside the temple, as outside our booths in the old Fair times.

‘The bells are said to be finer than any we have in England,’ remarked Conway.

‘Very likely: I am sure I wish they *were* in England: then we should have them mellowed by distance: as it is, I believe the drum of my ear has given way. I also find some difficulty in breathing.’

‘It is only the clouds of incense. We have the same thing in Europe in our Roman Catholic churches.’

'Yes, but as I am never in them that doesn't concern me.—By gad, there's a sensible fellow!'

'Good Heavens, what are you going to do, Pennicuick?'

'I am going to have a cigar. This excellent man has just lit his pipe at yonder altar—I never knew the use of candles there before; and I mean to do the same.'

The next moment Pennicuick had suited the action to the word; and without, as it seemed, exciting much comment. The Chinese religion is a curious mixture of devotion and irreverence, and a man will prostrate himself flat before an idol, and then light a pipe at his taper.

'Now they may make what noises and smells they like,' said Pennicuick triumphantly. 'I have got my consoler. You may depend upon it, if folks were allowed to smoke in church in England, it would set our respectable Establishment on its legs again. The men would go—because with a cigar one could stand even a sermon—and then of course the women would go even more than ever. When I get home, I mean to go into Parliament upon that platform.'

His tobacco, for which he had been craving—for to make such a man give up, or even postpone, an accustomed enjoyment is to do him a grievous wrong—put Pennicuick in high good humour. If he took no great interest in the proceedings around him, he showed no signs of boredom. Some things even amused him. One very pious pilgrim struck his forehead upon the paved floor of the temple no fewer than nine times, each time causing a distinct reverberation, notwithstanding the drums.

'Why don't he go on?' enquired our cynic of his friend. 'Has he cracked it?'

'No, no. You are most grossly ignorant of the rudiments of his religion. Nine is a sacred number. Nine prostrations, nine ablutions, nine repetitions of a formula, and so on, are necessary for everything important. You have to burn nine joss sticks, for example, before you can see, even with the eye of faith, the sacred Shay-le.'

'Who is he?'

'It is not a "he" at all. It is one of the most precious relics of Buddha, and supposed to be what the poets call one of the "pearls that adorn the brow of labour:" in other words, a drop of his perspiration.'

'Nonsense, you must be joking. This is too absurd even for Buddha.'

'I am perfectly serious: the Buddhists say that there are 84,000 pores in a man's body, and that after transmigration he

leaves behind 84,000 particles of dust. In the case of Buddha, by resisting evil and reverting to truth, he left instead 84,000 relics "as hard and as bright as diamonds." Of these, many have disappeared, but there is one in this very temple of Ay-tum-foo, said to emit the most brilliant colours, if you only look at it in the right light—that is, from a devotional point of view.'

'Let us see it, by all means,' cried Pennicuick.

'That is quite out of the question. No Christian need apply, I do assure you.'

'You may depend upon it, you can see it, like any other exhibition, Connie, if you choose to pay the entrance-fee.'

'I know that one of the preliminaries is to burn nine sticks of incense to Buddha.'

'I will burn ten as soon as look at him—I mean, rather than not look at his relic,' exclaimed Pennicuick enthusiastically.

'Well, I confess I shouldn't like to do that,' answered the other gravely.

'Why not? Your scruples astound me. For my part, I should have been a universal worshipper—a Polytheist—if anything could be got by it. I *have* gone in for one or two religions. I shall never forget confessing to a good priest at Rome—just to see what it was like, you know; by jingo, I astonished him. All the hair on his head stood up, till his tonsure looked like a pool in a forest. I have not the least objection to being a Buddhist, or anything else, for half an hour. Indeed, it is just possible—everything is possible—that Buddha may be worth cultivating. I always thought the gentleman who took off his hat to the fallen statue of Jupiter a very sagacious fellow. "If your turn ever comes round again, Mr. Jove, please to remember this salute."—Where is this blessed relic?'

'It is kept in the shrine at the back of the temple, and can only be seen on application to the high-priest. You might as well ask to see His Celestial Majesty the Son of Heaven himself. Let us come into the garden.'

The garden of a Chinese temple is always worth a visit. If the natives of the Flowery Land can boast of no other art, they excel in that of landscape gardening. They select as picturesque a spot as they can, and then improve it after their fashion, which, whatever its faults, never interferes with the beauties of nature. These they preserve, while adding those of art—grottoes, bridges, fancy ruins, and pagodas. Their taste for crowding every variety of picturesque object into a small space reminds one (though, it must be allowed, with a difference) of the pictures of Claude. It *also* reminds the Englishman—or at least it reminded Pennicuick—

of the place in which the natives of London are adjured per advertisement throughout the summer to pass a Happy Day, namely, Rosherville Gardens.

‘It’s deuced like Rosherville, is it not, Connie?’

‘Very much,’ said Conway, laughing; ‘a sort of cross between the scenery of that establishment and the willow-pattern plate.’

The grounds were extensive, and made to appear much more so by the manner in which they were laid out. You walked up and down, and round and round, and sometimes through and through (where there were caverns) without much progression. Presently, towards the rear of the temple, the two friends came upon a wooden edifice, which contained a fasting monk.

‘This is the Hermit of Cremorne,’ observed Pennicuick.

‘Hush, hush! he is a most sacred personage,’ whispered Conway. ‘He has been in these close quarters for nearly three years; and observe how uncomfortable they are. These long nails driven through the planks project on the inside, to prevent him leaning against the walls. For every thousand cash paid by any pilgrim a nail is taken out, and the old gentleman is made a little more easy. There have been a good many removed to-day, you may be sure.’

The Englishmen came up to the little pigeon-hole through which the inmate of this dog-kennel received the contributions of the pious, and likewise his scanty supplies of food, and looked in. The saint was seated tailor-fashion on a board, the upper part of his body being upright as an idol. There was a shelf before him with some books—works, probably, of the eternal Confucius. Not only did the pleasures of literature still remain to him—he was taking snuff. With these trifling exceptions, however, he was supposed to be quite dead to the vanities of the world. His face was blank and cadaverous; his long black hair, parted in the middle, flowed down to his waist; his nails, also, were very long and very black. He had been in his present place of residence for nearly three years, the full time appointed for his voluntary imprisonment; but he showed no signs of ‘breaking up and going away,’ at least in its holiday sense. He looked very much like breaking up from a physical point of view.

‘This is the biggest fool I have seen yet,’ observed Pennicuick, critically. ‘Do you think he would have a cigar?’ The scene was exactly such as one sees every day in the monkey-house in the Zoological Gardens.

‘I don’t think you’d better try him,’ said Conway; ‘he may take it as an insult, and ring his alarm bell.’ A huge bell was just outside his cell, which he could sound by pushing a piece

of wood against it, that was thrust through a hole for that purpose.

'I didn't see his bell,' said Pennicuick; 'that's clearly an article of luxury. If he rings for everything he wants, where is his merit?'

'He never rings for hot water for shaving—nor, to look at him, for any other purpose,' observed Conway, always maintaining a respectful air. 'I think you'd better let him be.'

'No, no: he shall have a cigar. He takes snuff, therefore he can't belong to the Anti-Tobacco Association. Hi, old gentleman! Have a weed?'

The ascetic lifted his heavy eyes, from which all meaning seemed to be expelled, and then protruded a shrivelled hand, into which Pennicuick dropped a cigar. The next instant he was immersed in pious meditation.

'I apologise,' observed Pennicuick to this inanimate object; 'you are not such a fool as you look; though that is not a high compliment, after all. I would have given five pounds, Connie,' added he, grimly, as they pursued their way, 'if that cigar had been a Surprise one.'

'What do you mean by a Surprise Cigar?'

'One of those with a cracker in it, that goes off when you are half way through it. Imagine the effect upon a pious ascetic who has never stirred out of a box like that for three years, or been accustomed to any sensation beyond what is covered by a pinch of snuff.'

'The effect upon us, also, would be rather serious,' observed Conway: 'our lives would not be worth an hour's purchase.'

'I don't believe a word of it. I think it would all be put down to Buddha, and would give that old gentleman—if he lived through it—a higher reputation with the faithful than ever.'

'Well, I am glad you were not in a position to try the experiment. Come, we have got to the end of our tether; there is nothing more to be seen, and it is time to get back to the boat and our dinner.'

'Very good: but what is that queer-shaped house standing all alone, at the back of everything, with the gentleman in the yellow robe apparently keeping guard over it?'

'Oh, that is the *sanctum sanctorum*, in which the Shay-le, or blessed relic of Buddha, is kept. It is so sacred, you see, that nobody comes near it.'

'I mean to see it,' said Pennicuick, confidently; 'so here goes.'

'Good Heavens, man, it's the chief-priest himself.' But before he had finished his sentence, Pennicuick had already presented *himself* before that august individual.

CHAPTER IV.

THE SHAY-LE.

It was Arthur Conway's habit on touching foreign soil to begin to make himself acquainted as far as possible with the language of its inhabitants, and he had given all the greater attention to the Chinese tongue on account of its supreme difficulty; perhaps he now knew nearly as much about it as an Englishman expensively educated at one of our public schools knows of the Continental languages when he returns from his first tour; he could ask a few questions—after the fashion of the dialogue-books—and procure for himself the necessaries of life, and he could understand what was said to him pretty well. He exceedingly disapproved of his friend's having anything to say—or rather to gesticulate—to the high-priest of Ay-tum-foo, but he was too loyal to leave him in the lurch; and therefore he hastened to the spot where that enormously important ecclesiastic and his friend were by this time standing together; the former bowing slightly in the urbane national manner, and the latter pronouncing the word 'Shay-le, Shay-le,' in as insinuating a tone as he could compass.

There is always this difficulty in dealing with the Buddhist priest (which cynics may say is not wholly confined to ecclesiastics of that persuasion), namely, that although he may be one of the most venerable and pious of human beings, it may also happen that he may be very much the reverse of all this, and indeed a most superlative scoundrel. The reason of this is that some persons embrace the sacred profession from the most secular of reasons. The completely shaven head, the burns and bruises that are generally to be seen sprinkled over them in plentiful patches, and the austerity which distinguishes their lives and keeps them apart from other men, offer great opportunities for disguise. So that before now very considerable criminals have escaped punishment, and even lived for the rest of their lives in the odour of sanctity, by assuming the vows and habit of the priesthood. Imagine the case of one's meeting the Archbishop of Canterbury, and not being quite sure that his Grace of Lambeth had not at one time experienced the gaol discipline of neighbouring Millbank. However, the probability of the high-priest of Ay-tum-foo's being all that he should be was of course far greater than the reverse: though the fact of his having a finger or two burnt off (in excess of zeal), as well as his other self-inflicted injuries, was perhaps a suspicious circumstance: ('for being so particular religious, why that, you see, puts persons on their guard;') he had a sort of beadle's mace in one hand, and a human skull in

the other, and in his gown of yellow silk looked altogether a remarkable object

'Lawya-lawya,' commenced Conway, not of course that this individual was a lawyer, but because that is the mode of address used to a high-priest; 'we are two Englishmen who have come from far to see this famous temple.' Here Conway had unconsciously placed the good priest in a position of much embarrassment, for the polite way of the Chinese is to underrate anything of their own, and to exaggerate the possessions of their interlocutor. If the temple had been the priest's private mansion he would, for example, have answered, 'You have given your honourable selves unnecessary trouble in coming to see my wretched hovel.' But as it was the house of his god he could scarcely speak of it in a depreciatory way. Upon the whole he judged it better to take a general view of matters.

'After all, oh Christians, your religion and that of Buddha are alike as melons.'

Conway translated this would-be compliment to his friend, who took it in a more literal sense than the good priest had probably intended.

'Quite right: tell him he's a very sensible fellow, and that I quite agree with him. And then ask him to show us the relic.' Conway accomplished this with much delicacy and caution, but the high-priest lifted up both staff and skull in shocked negation. Such a proposition was impossible: even his own people, as the Englishman might have observed, had not ventured within the sacred precincts of the Shay-le, which had been exhibited to the Faithful at sunrise that morning, positively for the last time until next feast-day. The precious casket which contained it could never be opened without an act of adoration in the form of a burnt offering; and even if it were, it could not be seen by white devils—he apologised for having no other name for them—because it was only visible to the eye of Faith.

'Look here, Connie: I mean to see it,' persisted Pennicuick. 'Tell the old beggar that I am a convert to the Buddhist faith. Here are my joss sticks, which I am prepared to sacrifice as the law directs: it will be a *bonâ-fide* transaction. And, I say, just add that I should like to give five pounds or so to the keeper of the shrine.'

This audacious speech Conway translated as insinuatingly as his slender knowledge of Chinese enabled him to do, and, much to his surprise, the priest took it in good part. Five English pounds represent a very considerable sum in the Flowery Land, and no doubt he recalled to mind how much could be done with them to

the glory of Buddha. In the great hall of gods, adjacent to the temple, there was more than one deity from whom very literally the guilt was a good deal rubbed off; and who had scarcely enough in his inside to maintain the 'vital principle,' or, as we say, to keep body and soul together. There is nothing so distressing to a high-priest—wounding at once his *amour-propre* and his *esprit de corps*—as to see his gods out of repair. Of course there was a difficulty as to the genuine adhesion of Mr. Ralph Pennicuick to Buddhism; the unyielding and somewhat contemptuous expression of his countenance did not, it must be confessed, impress one with the idea of a devotee; but there he was, at all events, a professing believer, with one of his joss sticks already lighted; and does not Confucius himself lay it down as an axiom that we are to believe in a man's professions until they have been shown to be false? Moreover, at this supreme moment, Pennicuick produced his purse, which, being of network, showed the glint of sovereigns.

'Heaven forbid,' said the good priest, 'that I should quench any man's pious zeal.' And with a grave inclination of his head he led the way to the little bell-shaped edifice in which the precious Shay-le was deposited. Conway remained where he stood, not altogether at his ease. Without having the good nature that belongs to high spirits, his friend had a turn for mischief, which in his younger days had led him into some serious scrapes, and which even now occasionally exhibited itself; his remark about the 'surprise cigar' showed the way his thoughts had been tending, and it was just possible that he designed to play some absurd trick upon the high-priest to recompense himself for having let the hermit slip so easily through his fingers. Above all it puzzled Conway to account for his friend's giving so large a sum to see a relic—things for which he always expressed the utmost contempt—unless he had some whim of his own to serve at the same time.

It was, therefore, with no slight sense of relief that after a few minutes he saw Pennicuick emerge from the shrine, and part company with the priest, apparently on the best of terms.

'Well, Penn, and what was it? Or are you bound to secrecy upon a subject so tremendous?' enquired Conway, laughing.

'My dear fellow, there are a dozen of them, and all rubbish,' was his friend's reply. 'Let us get home, for I am downright sick of Buddha and all his works.'

There was something strange in the speaker's manner that convinced his hearer that something had happened within the last few minutes of an unexpected or surprising kind. If the other had had the least grain of superstition in him, Conway might have even supposed that he had been impressed by some seemingly super-

natural incident; so grave and serious was his air. However, after a few minutes, Pennicuick proceeded to tell what had happened without further importunity; and as it certainly appeared that he had got very little for his five pounds, perhaps, thought Conway, it was *that* which made him look so serious.

What Pennicuick had seen at the shrine of Ay-tum-foo appeared to have been much the same as is seen at similar institutions nearer home: the small bones of a saint or two, and even the shavings of a toe-nail of Huang Ing Huk, the goddess of mercy; which is all that is left of her in China.

‘But you surely saw the Shay-le, the relic of Buddha?’ observed Conway.

‘Well, I don’t know whether I did or not,’ answered the other drily. ‘The thing was in a small wooden pagoda, almost dropping to pieces with age, which the priest unlocked for me with every sign of reverence. I looked in and understood him to say that the thing lay at the bottom; I saw nothing for some time, and then—whether it was fancy or not, I will not swear—I did seem to see something sparkling. It may have been a bit of glass, or even the sparks from one’s own eyes that are struck out from too much staring into darkness.’

‘I am afraid you are still a sceptic, Penn. The received opinion of the sacred Shay-le is that it emits coloured light, and that no fire will burn nor diamond-headed hammer bruise it. It is also sometimes surrounded by a halo “as big as a cart-wheel.”’

‘The last was not the case to-day, I will positively swear,’ said Pennicuick: ‘and as for the rest of the Shay-le’s attributes, I will take your word for them.’ And no more was said about the matter.

The two friends dined in the boat, as usual, and afterwards some cormorant-fishing was got up for their delectation. The rivers, canals, and even the pools in China are alive with fish. Nothing is more common than to see a native catching them with his hands, not as we do when tickling trout, with infinite pains and caution, but quite otherwise. He strikes the water sharply, the noise and shock of which cause the fish to take refuge in the mud, where he feels them with his feet, and then dives down after them. While the boat of the Englishmen lay at anchor, their rowers had provided them with a fish course by this simple means; but the cormorant business was really a high-class performance. In the present case, there were no fewer than a dozen of these birds, which at a word from their master left the small craft that carried them, and spread themselves over the canal, the sea-green eyes of each fixed at once upon its finny prey, and hardly had they cloven the water than they

reappeared with the prize in their sharp notched bills. Most curious of all, if the fish was too large for one to convey to his master, the others came to his assistance, and captured it by their united efforts. A collar of straw, carefully arranged round the upper part of the neck, prevented the thing, as the gossips say, 'from going any farther,' and ensured his returns to the proprietor.

The sport was amusing even to Conway who had seen it before, while its ingenuity extorted Pennicuick's admiration.

'I am glad you find something to praise in China at last,' said Conway.

'I admire its cormorants, my dear fellow: which seem to be very numerous.'

'Still, however clever you allow the birds to be, their masters who taught them must have a still larger share of credit. Besides, it is not so very clever to fish for other people, with a ring round your neck which prevents your deriving any advantage from your own exertions.'

'How can you talk such nonsense, Connie, with the recollection of what we have seen to-day so fresh in your mind? The relations between priest and people are here accurately symbolised, except that the situation is reversed. The priests are the cormorants who compel the people to fish for them, with a ring—or a rope—round their necks.'

'It seems to me you are still sore at having spent those five pounds upon the representative of Ay-tum-foo,' said Conway silyly. 'I don't think you got much for your money.'

'That's true,' said Pennicuick, with a grim smile.

'Yet, upon my life, I believe you got more than you bargained for, Penn, up yonder.' And Conway pointed to the distant hill crowned by the temple. 'Did they make you a real Buddhist after some unpleasant form of initiation such as is said to prevail among Freemasons?'

'Perhaps,' said Pennicuick indifferently: 'also perhaps not.'

'Shall we stay where we are for the night or move along, Penn?' enquired his companion presently. 'The Mandarin to whom I have got the letter of introduction lives about six miles up stream, and it is too late—except for official visits—to make our call upon him. It would be better therefore to stay here, and go on in the morning, especially as all the fun is to come over again at sunrise to-morrow —'

'What fun?' interrupted Pennicuick.

'Why, the pilgrimage to the temple, and your sacred Shay-le.'

'Why, that old priest in yellow said it would not be shown till the next feast-day?' exclaimed Pennicuick.

‘Yes, but when he said that, his reverence had not given way to your solicitations; moreover, to-morrow *is* a feast-day, though one of less importance than to-day. But you seem to be tired of it all, and rather in a hurry to get away. Of course we can go on to-night if you please.’

‘I don’t care twopence whether we do or not,’ answered Pennicuck. There was a look of doggedness, almost of defiance, in his tone, that annoyed Conway, and not the less because it was wholly unaccountable. He was not a man to put up with another’s caprices or sullenness.

‘I care as little as you do. We will stay here then,’ he answered curtly.

The reply seemed of small consequence enough; but the value of words, like that of pictures, is sometimes nought at first, and afterwards turns out to be priceless. In this case that ‘We will stay here then’ of Arthur Conway’s proved a Sentence of Death.

Nothing, however, could be more peaceful, or less indicative of evil, than the scene wherein it was spoken. The pilgrims had all departed, leaving no tokens of their presence on land or water. The priests were at their solitary vespers, or perhaps counting the ‘cash’ that had been received during the day. The beggars had shrunk away into cliffs and caves, to refresh themselves with sleep for the resumption of operations on the morrow. The soldiers and boatmen were either asleep or silently smoking: or perhaps both: for though there is a theory in Europe that people do not enjoy tobacco in the dark or with their eyes shut, it does not hold good in China. The very birds of the air were silent. Conway got out his desk and began to write at the little table.

‘Hullo, Connie? You are not going to keep a journal surely?’

‘No. I am writing home.’

‘Oh dear! What an excellent husband!’ remarked Pennicuck. There was a touch of satire in the tone that did not escape the other’s ears. The colour came into his cheek, as he answered coldly, ‘I am writing to Nelly.’

‘There can be no great hurry about it, my dear fellow, as we shall not be back at Shanghae for six weeks.’

‘There may be some opportunity of sending a letter, and I make a point of writing by every mail.’

‘You astonish me. What the deuce do you find to say?’

‘To my daughter? Well; I tell her everything that I think will interest her which I hear or see.’

‘Good Heavens! I think I see myself writing in the same

style to Raymond. "China is a large and populous country: it is governed by an Emperor called the Son of Heaven. The amount of tea drunk in Shanghai alone is estimated at a million pounds." He would not much care for that, I think. My own style is, "Dear Ray,—Shall be home in August or thereabouts. In the mean time, draw on me as usual." Why, you have not seen your Nelly for these ten years.'

'No; and it may be ten years more before I do see her. It is the more necessary therefore to do all I can to keep my memory green with her.'

'I see.'

Nothing more was said. Conway went on with his letter, which occupied him for a long time; when he had finished—or rather, when he had written it up to the latest date, for it was never destined to be finished—he looked up, and saw by the dull light of the cabin lamp that his friend had fallen asleep. Then he turned in himself, and was soon sunk in slumber.

But Pennicuick was only feigning sleep. When he found himself no longer under the observation of his friend, he took something out of his breast pocket, and, softly rising, held it beneath the rays of the lamp. It was a large and solid piece of glass or crystal cut into facets, and resembled a drop from a chandelier. It emitted a light so bright and sparkling that one almost expected it to be accompanied with sound. There was a sound, though it did not come from this object; it was like the faint movement of a ring that slides upon a bar. Pennicuick's face darkened in an instant, then grew very 'set' and hard; he dropped his right hand noiselessly into his shooting-jacket pocket, and moved towards the curtains that separated the cabin from the front compartment. He parted them softly with the finger that still held the piece of crystal, and looked forth with keen and steadfast eyes. Beneath him lay six sleeping men; the five soldiers, and their commander Fu-chow. It was the same scene as that which Conway had looked upon on the morning of that very day, and with the like suspicion. Only there had not been such menace in his eyes as now gleamed from those of his friend.

They took in the whole six soldiers at a glance, but fixed themselves on Fu-chow. The round-faced captain lay nearest to him; his pig-tail was towards him; his face, half averted, lay on its pillow-mat, to all appearance in sound sleep. The others were snoring, however, and this man was not. Pennicuick drew his hand up out of his pocket and with it a six-barrelled revolver. The moonlight shone brightly on the steel, as he levelled it at the head of Fu-chow.

Then on the silence broke sharply a sudden click. No one moved, and therefore, reasoned Pennicuick, no one heard it.

If Fu-chow had heard, with the muzzle of that deadly weapon within two feet of him, he must surely have made some movement—which in that case would have been the last he would have ever made. But Fu-chow lay like a log, or an apple branch with one great round fruit upon it, the cheeks of which retained their red. Then Pennicuick replaced his weapon in his pocket, dropped the curtain, and again fell to regarding the object in his left hand. He had now apparently new views respecting it, for he pushed aside the mat that at night filled the place of cabin window, and leant thoughtfully over the moonlit wave. Should he drop the crystal or should he not? It was heavy for its size—which was about that of one of the glass rests that are used at dinner tables to support the carver's knife and fork—and at the bottom of the canal, as had been shown that day by the fishermen, was a deep layer of mud into which it would quickly sink. He held it between his fingers with that intent, but at that moment the moonbeams struck upon it, and like steel on flint evoked a thousand sparkles; red, blue, and emerald green, they flashed on his admiring eyes.

‘It is not an opal,’ he murmured; ‘what the deuce is it? I will wear it, hidden, like an amulet, here in China; and when I get home to Pall Mall, I’ll have it set for a scarf-pin. I wonder what the jeweller will say to it, and whether it is worth the five pounds.’

Though, as we have said, like a drop from a chandelier, this crystal had no hole through it; but there was a little ridge sunk round the middle, and about this Pennicuick wound a thread of silk, and suspended it round his neck, and next his skin. ‘It is like a charm that fools wear,’ he muttered to himself; ‘I wonder whether it will bring me good luck or bad.’ And then he too lay down and fell asleep.

(To be continued.)





FU-CHOW LAY LIKE A LOG.

The Homes and Haunts of the Italian Poets.

II. PETRARCH.

BY FRANCES ELEANOR TROLLOPE.

Di pensier in pensier, di monte in monte
Mi guida Amor: . . .—Canzone 39.

From thought to thought, from hill to hill, Love leads me.

Two spots stand out like luminous points in the story of Petrarch's life, as we look back upon it across the long vista of five hundred years: Avignon, with its neighbouring retreat of Vacluse, where the lover first beheld Laura and the poet first glorified her; and Arquà, the remote village amongst the Euganean Hills, where that true lover and great poet ended his earthly pilgrimage. But a long road intervenes between the two—a road leading through many stately cities, and haunts of old renown, winding across a great part of Europe; now pleasant, now painful, rough and smooth by turns, as is the manner of terrestrial roads; now populated by the noblest spirits of the time, and now infested by thieves. Few men of his generation can have travelled more than Petrarch. Besides the chief cities of Italy, he visited Paris, Ghent, Liège, Aix-la-Chapelle, Cologne, and other places. There are in his writings ('Familiar Epistles,' and 'Odes,' both in Latin) some indications of his having coasted the shores of Spain, and even of his having touched England; but they are vague and obscure.

Only a few, however, of the places visited in his numerous journeys can be enumerated amongst his homes and haunts. He may properly be said to have had a temporary home at Vacluse, Parma, Padua, Milan, Venice, and Arquà. Other cities—Rome, Florence, Naples, Pavia, Verona—held him for briefer periods. We shall endeavour to trace his sojourn in the more important and interesting of these places, and to obtain some glimpses of the aspect they must have presented to those mild brown eyes which looked from under the laurel wreath of Francesco Petrarca.

He was born on the night of July 19, 1304, at Arezzo, whither his father had retired after being exiled from Florence in that same year; a year memorable for the banishment of a far more illustrious exile, Dante Alighieri.¹ And little thought the worthy

¹ Tiraboschi gives this date. But Ginguene, in his 'History of Italian Literature,'

Florentine notary 'Pietro, commonly called *Petracco*,' and Eletta Canigiani, his wife, that the infant born to them in those days of trouble was destined to fill the world with a poetic name and fame second only, throughout Italy, to those of their great townsman and fellow exile, the mighty Dante himself. When only seven months old, Francesco was carried from Arezzo to Ancisa or Incisa in the Val d'Arno, about fourteen miles above Florence, and there remained with his mother, on a small farm belonging to her family, until he was seven years old. Thus, then, the first impressions of external nature made on that sensitive and appreciative young mind were those of the Val d'Arno, with its classic river, its fertile fields, the varied and beautiful lines of its mountains,—near and distant,—its wealth of spring blossoms, its summer harvests of amber corn covering the rich brown soil with a golden robe, its purple vintages, and winter sunsets gorgeous with rich tints and lucid lakes of light, which might well recur to the poet's mental vision when in later years he dreamed of the celestial dwelling where his dead Laura shone in angel purity. There, too, there fell upon the quick childish ear the accents of that '*parlar Toscano*'—of that Tuscan tongue, which, albeit still rude and unpolished, was the original source of Italian undefiled, and which Dante already had stamped with the eternal power of his genius—'*monumentum ære perennius*.' A love for the beauties of nature, and an exquisite *responsiveness* to her varying aspects, are traits in Petrarch's writings very noteworthy and singular in a man of his time and of his race. Throughout his life he seems to have loved the country—not, indeed, with the profound passion of a Wordsworth, or the loving and delicate observation of a Tennyson, but still with a sentiment which is to this day very rare among his countrymen. In the exquisite sonnet, for example, which commences,

Se lamentar d'augelli, o verdi fronde,

(one of those written 'In Morte di Madonna Laura'), he expresses his sensibility to all sounds of the wood and stream, and how inextricably they are blended in his mind with the image of her whom he had lately lost. Perhaps there are few spots of civilised ground less changed in these five hundred years than the Val d'Arno. One exception must be made to this statement, and it is an important one, it must be owned: the rich forest which clothed the hills and mountains had not yet been destroyed by man's greed

says that Petracco and Dante were both implicated in an attempt of the party of the Bianchi to re-enter Florence in 1304. This is more consonant with the date of 1302, given by other writers as that of Dante's exile from Florence.

and improvidence.¹ But as to the general aspect of the '*poderi*' (farms), the clumsy antique wooden ploughs, and the dove-coloured oxen that draw them, looking as though they were animated from some Greek or Roman frieze,—as to the sunburnt peasants toiling with heavy-handled spade among the olive and mulberry trees, or pruning the tangled vine, what time they chant in cadence an old-world ditty, half savage, wholly sad,—as to the massive stone houses where they dwell, the stone fountains carved with rude device of leaf or ornament, where the women wash their household linen, or stand, pitcher on head, to gossip in the summer twilight,—as to the very phrase and idiom of their speech, Petrarch would find but little changed of all these things to eye or ear, could he return and stand once more embodied where his earliest years were passed.

From Ancisa, Notary Petracco and his wife removed to Pisa with their family—there was now a second son, Gherardo, Petrarch's only brother; but after a stay there of about a year, the exile was obliged to relinquish all hope of being restored to his rights and property in Florence, and went to settle in Avignon, where Pope Clement V. had established his court, and where many proscribed Italians found a refuge (A.D. 1313). Here Petracco had some hopes of obtaining employment. And, in fact, he must have found some means of gaining a livelihood; but what they were, and whether he continued to follow the legal profession to which he properly belonged, does not clearly appear. This much is certain; that whilst he, for purposes of business, remained in Avignon, he was obliged by reason of the dearth of living and lodging in that city—crowded as it was by the members of a luxurious and wealthy court, and all they brought in their train—to send his wife and children to Carpentras, a little city about four leagues distant from Avignon. Petracco made frequent journeys to visit his family at Carpentras, and on one of these occasions he went to see the fountain of Vaucluse. A very unimportant matter, one would say; that an obscure notary should chance to light upon a picturesque and secluded spot in Provence! and yet it was a circumstance which has given to the world of letters certain masterpieces to whose author men do homage still, after five centuries. For little Francesco, then ten years old, obtained leave to accompany his father to Vaucluse, and the view of that umbrageous solitude made an ineffaceable impression on his ardent imagination.

For our present purpose it were useless to follow the young

¹ They have been less destroyed in the neighbouring Casentino than in any other part of the Tuscan Apennine.

Francesco to Montpellier and Bologna, in both of which universities he studied, for neither of them can be said to have been a home or haunt of his; rather were they the scenes of an enforced sojourn which held him merely in the bonds of dry and disagreeable duty. Not that he was ever a sluggard at his studies. On the contrary, his thirst for knowledge and his love of books were singularly intense even from his earliest youth. But the innate bent of his mind was towards philosophy and poetry; it had no affinity with the pedantic minutiae of the canon and civil law as taught in those seats of learning in the fourteenth century! He, indeed, gives another than a purely intellectual ground for this repugnance. Here are his own words taken from the famous 'Epistle to Posterity,'—a work, as has been shrewdly remarked by one of his critics, more fortunate than some others bearing that address, inasmuch as it has succeeded in reaching its destination:

'Thence' (from Carpentras) 'I passed to the study of the law in Montpellier, and afterwards in Bologna. I spent four years in the first-named city, and three in the second, and went through the entire course of civil law. Many persons said that I might have made no small advancement in that study, had I continued to follow it. But no sooner had I lost my parents, than I abandoned it altogether; not because I do not love the authority of the laws, which is most high, and full of Roman antiquity, in which I much delight; but because the iniquity of men has corrupted the practice of law. And I could not bear to study a science of which I would not make an infamous use, and could scarcely make an honest one: and even had I tried to do so, my honesty would have been held to be but ignorance.'

At Bologna, however, Petrarca enjoyed the society of some congenial spirits; and, if he did not study law to any practical purpose, he doubtless enriched his mind with the varied culture which, according to the measure of the times, was to be found in that ancient and learned city. Cino da Pistoia, himself no mean poet, was at that time professor of jurisprudence in Bologna; and Petrarch sympathised with him in his worship of the Muses. The university of Bologna was at this period (about 1325) numerous and frequented, and celebrated throughout Europe. Scholars from many lands thronged its lecture halls and populated its streets, having for a common medium of communication the corrupt mediæval Latin which it was at a later period one of our poet's glories to have purified and corrected. Under the shade of the quaint arcades which still make Bologna picturesque, walked many noteworthy figures: some cowed and robed in the staid garments of professors: others gay in the parti-coloured costumes of the time; many, probably,

roughly clad, poorly fed, and worse lodged; for poverty has been the close companion of learning from old time, and the manners of the century accustomed all men to a coarseness of living which would be deemed intolerable in these latter days. But then, as now, doubtless the summer sun blazed fiercely on the wide plain where old Bologna sits, making the shelter of the stone arcades darkly pleasant after its blinding glare; and then, as now, the icy winds from the bleak Apennine came swooping down upon the city, screaming like mountain eagles, beating themselves wildly against fretted stone-work and marble column, and piercing with their frozen breath through many a threadbare mantle beneath which numbed fingers held some vellum-bound volume of deep lore. Then too, as now (perhaps somewhat less hoary on its rugged surface), the great brick tower reared its slanting line against the sky—that tower which Dante mentions in the 31st canto of the ‘*Inferno*,’ under the name of ‘*Carisenda*,’ making it the subject of a magnificent comparison with the gigantic Antæus stooping his huge bulk to lift the poet and his guide. Doubtless Francesco Petrarca, then a handsome youth of twenty, often stood

a riguardar la Carisenda

Sott’ il chinato,

(‘looking up at Carisenda under the leaning side’); and possibly not without recalling that very verse of the mighty Tuscan’s poem.

The portraits of Petrarch with which we are familiar represent him in middle life, if not already on the downward slope. It is a mild, sweet face; but rather too fleshy, and certainly not eminently handsome. Nevertheless, we know by various testimony that Petrarch was in his youth remarkable for the elegance and beauty of his person. Indeed, in one of the letters to his brother, written in after life, he speaks of the youthful vanity which made him so choice and careful in his attire, and alludes unmistakably to his personal attractions as being well known and admitted on all hands. He was in the first bloom of early manhood, handsome, cultured, enthusiastic, and already a poet, when he left Bologna to return to Avignon. The immediate cause of his return was the death of his parents, who appear both to have died within the same year. The precise date is uncertain; but it seems to be fairly well ascertained that Notary Petracco died about the year 1326, whilst his sons were absent at Bologna, and that Eletta followed her husband shortly afterwards. Tiraboschi points out some lines in a later ode of Petrarch’s which lead to the conclusion that Francesco and Gherardo stood by their mother’s death-bed after their return to Avignon:

gemitus et cætera digna tulisti,
Dum stetit ante oculos feretrum miserabile nostros,
Ac licuit gelidis lacrimas infundere membris ;

whereas the Abbé de Sade asserts that Eletta died whilst her sons were away in Bologna. The matter is not of great importance, save in so far as the lines above quoted illustrate the tenderly affectionate heart which Petrarch preserved from youth to age, unhardened by troubles and the world.

The two brothers Francesco and Gherardo (the latter the junior by a year or two) found themselves in no very flourishing circumstances in that year of grace 1326. Their patrimony would probably have been but slender at the best; for, as the reader will remember, Petracco was a banished man, and had not found his profession sufficiently lucrative in Avignon to enable him to keep his family in that luxurious and expensive city; but it was diminished, nay, absolutely made away with, by some faithless guardians and trustees. It may be observed, in passing, that this fact also serves to confirm Tiraboschi's view: viz. that Petracco died first, and his wife within a year after him; since, if the notary had lived up to the period of his son's return from Bologna, the trustees in question would have had no time to dissipate the little property he had to bequeath. Under these circumstances, what career remained open to the brothers? At that time, and in that place, there was but one—the Church. All good gifts of this world (not to mention others beyond, of which they professed to hold a monopoly!) were in the hands of ecclesiastics. Gherardo after a time devoted himself to a religious life, and finally became a Carthusian monk. But Francesco, although he held more than one benefice, and was as devout a believer in the teachings of the Church as could be found in that believing age, never appears to have become imbued with the true priestly spirit. He received the tonsure at the age of two-and-twenty, but seems not to have proceeded further in the career of a churchman than the grade of deacon.

Pope John XXII. sat at this time in the chair of St. Peter, transferred to the Provençal city of Avignon, and the Papal court under his rule was terribly corrupt. Petrarch continually speaks of it as 'the Western Babylon.' The private life of Pope John XXII. was, indeed, far more blameless on the score of morals than that of many of his predecessors and successors; but as Pontiff he was a fertile source of wide-spreading corruption, in consequence of the sordid avarice which induced him to practise simony on a colossal scale. He openly sold benefices, and especially bishoprics; and was the first Pope who assumed the

prerogative of appointing bishops, they having been previously nominated by the churches. At his death he is said, on the authority of Giovanni Villani, brother to the Pope's banker at Avignon, to have left behind him a treasure amounting to eighteen millions of florins (an enormous sum in those days); without reckoning the value of seven millions more, in jewels, plate, and decorations for the altar. Such was the shepherd, such the flock, when young Francesco Petrarca entered it. Nor is it irrelevant, in an attempt to produce a faithful, if faint, outline of the poet and his surroundings, to mark in the first place what were the influences poured down from high places, what the example proposed to imitative youth, what the lesson taught by the most cursory observation of the world about him; and then be it said, in honour of the truth and of our poet, that he remained sound at heart in the midst of rottenness; that he despised and hated the sordid avarice which turned the house of prayer into a den of thieves; that, albeit not free from the frailties of humanity and youth, his faults were human, not brutal; that he had the manly courage to raise his voice and wield his pen at the dictates of conscience; and that living in an atmosphere of debauchery, and nourished in great part upon a licentious literature, he has left an imperishable record of pure and exalted love untainted by one breath of baseness. Sismondi, albeit, as he frankly owns, no worshipper of Petrarch's verse, bears this testimony to him in his '*Littérature du Midi*': 'Not any poet in any language is more perfectly pure, more completely irreproachable in respect of decency and morality; and this merit, in which doubtless both Petrarch and Laura may claim an equal share, is the more remarkable inasmuch as the models which Petrarch followed were very far from having attained to it. The verses of the troubadours and the *trouvères* were equally licentious.'

Behold, then, Francis Petrarch, in the twenty-third year of his age, received into the most brilliant and distinguished circles of Avignon. He devoted a portion of his time to study—especially to history and philosophy—and literature. He had already written verses which were favourably known, and served to make him welcome in the most cultured society of the place; but these verses were in Latin. He had not yet, in imitation of Dante, Cino da Pistoia, and other poets, wooed the muse in the vulgar tongue. He had a friend whom he loved and was true to until death—Jacopo Colonna, son of the Roman patrician Stefano, the head of that famous house. Jacopo Colonna was young, brilliant, and amiable; and his friendship was doubtless pleasant and precious to the sensitive and appreciative Petrarch. But a brighter star was to rise, a profounder sentiment to fill his soul and inspire his

imagination: on the sixth day of April, 1327, he first beheld Laura—and Love was lord of all.

To the Abbé de Sade, a descendant of the family of her husband, belongs the honour of having discovered, and finally proved beyond the possibility of dispute, the birth and parentage of this celebrated woman, which had been a theme of discussion and dispute to several generations of literary historians. Laura was the daughter of the Chevalier Audebert de Noves, syndic of Avignon, and of Ermessenda, his wife. She was born in a suburb of Avignon, about the year 1308, and married in 1325 to Hugues, the son of Paul de Sade. She was thus nineteen years old, and had been a wife already two years, when Petrarch first saw her in the church of St. Clare in Avignon. The portrait which the poet has left us of her (the only authentic one extant) certainly represents a combination of dignity, grace, and beauty worthy to inspire the impassioned admiration he has expressed in his immortal rhymes. She had golden hair, dark, soft, and luminous eyes, a fair complexion, and an elegant form. Her shining golden tresses and her beautiful eyes are above all eulogised in a thousand fanciful ways by the enamoured poet. He speaks, too, of her rich and varied raiment: 'Robes green, blood-red, or dark, or purple-hued' (canzone 6, v. 1). He praises her singing, as in the 184th sonnet:

Da quali Angeli mosse, e di qual spera
Quel celeste cantar,

('From what angelic sphere came that celestial singing?'), and in the 189th, where he describes Laura and twelve female companions ('Twelve stars, and in their midst a shining sun') sitting in a boat, and afterwards in a 'triumphal chariot,' in which he says:

E Laura mia con suoi santi atti schifi
Sedersi in parte, e cantar dolcemente.

('And Laura mine, with saintly modest air, sitting apart and singing dulcetly.')

Besides and above all these graces and accomplishments, Laura was a faithful wife, an honoured mother, a woman whose life and example were sweet and wholesome in a world where such examples were rare. Generations have crumbled to dust since she lived and Petrarch loved; but it may truly be said that the fragrance of her purity lingers for us in her poet's verse, and, in the words of one of our own lyrists, we 'smell the rose above the mould.' A great deal of labour and learning have been expended on ascertaining the real relations between Petrarch and Laura—the real sentiments of the former towards the latter, both as a man and a poet; and the real feeling with which she regarded him. And, alas, a great heap

of dusty nonsense has been laboriously accumulated in the process! The matter should be simple enough, if looked at simply, one would think. Petrarch has stated his own case with singular candour, and given us all the aspects of it both in prose and in verse. But, by a curious fatality or perverseness, the commentators take any method of arriving at the truth rather than the plain method of believing what Petrarch (the best, and, in one sense, the only, authority on the matter) says himself! Some diligent writers have maintained that Laura was a mere figment—an allegorical abstraction—a peg to hang fine verses on! Others admit her existence as a human being, but declare that Petrarch's love for her was only a poetic fiction. Others, again, admit that he loved her; but merely in some transcendental, ultra-Platonic fashion, entirely apart from the ordinary passions of humanity. The facts, nevertheless, are extremely simple. Laura was a woman young, beautiful, virtuous, and already, when Petrarch first saw her, bound by the sacred ties of duty to another man. Petrarch loved her with the soul of a poet, and also with the heart and passions of a man. To say that he idealised and exalted her in his verses, is merely to say that he was a poet.

The primrose by the river's brim
A yellow primrose was to him,
And it was something more.

And, indeed, all true love sees with a poet's eye in some sense, and has a transfiguring power of beauty like the blessed sun himself. To say that his Platonic worship of her excellences and virtues was transfused with the glow of earthly passion, is merely to say that he was a mortal man. But to say that the Madonna Laura of the sonnets and *canzoni* was an academical fiction, invented and maintained for the purpose of rhyming about her, is at once to petrify all the poems into a mere fossil collection of cold conceits; and is, moreover, to contradict the explicit declarations of Petrarch himself!

What appears to the present writer to be really interesting and worthy of examination by us of this nineteenth century, is the influence on Petrarch's mind of the moral and religious education of his day, in making him struggle against his love, and the reasons why he so struggled. Such reasons present themselves to the modern reader as being very obvious and sufficient. Petrarch had entered on the career of an ecclesiastic, although he had not taken, nor does he appear to have ever taken, the binding vows of a priest; and Laura was the wife of another man. But I think it is clear to anyone who examines, not only the poems, but the

prose writings of Petrarch, that these were not *altogether* the reasons which prevailed with him, although, doubtless, they had much weight. It is not merely that Petrarch's better self recoils from the idea of sullyng his pure idol or smirching his own soul by sinful frailty, but that he deems *all* strong love for the creature, however pure and fervent, to be in some sort robbed from the Creator. Albeit he explicitly says (and all contemporary testimony and subsequent research irrefragably confirm him) that his love for Laura was '*unico e onestissimo*' (single, and most chaste), yet he alludes to it on sundry occasions in terms which would now imply the consciousness of some great sin. In a letter to the celebrated Padre Dionisio da Borgo San Sepolcro, an Augustine monk, and then Professor at the University of Paris, he says: ¹ 'To-day is completed the tenth year since I abandoned my youthful studies and departed from Bologna; and oh, everlasting God! oh, immutable Wisdom! how many and how great changes in me hath this space of time beheld! Nor am I yet arrived in port so as to be able securely to look back on tempests past. Perhaps the time may come when I may be able to scan events in the order in which they happened, prefacing them with that saying of thy St. Augustine: "I will record my past vileness and the carnal corruptions of my soul, not because I love them, but because I love Thee, my God." I no longer love that which I was wont to love;—nay, I lie: I do love, but more soberly and sadly. . . . I love against my will, with lamentation and weeping.' It is strange to find Petrarch comparing his love for Laura with St. Augustine's confession of 'vilenesses.' Tiraboschi translates the word academically *debolezze*—weaknesses. But the original, as quoted in Petrarch's letter, is *fœditates*. But, to point the significance of the whole passage, it will be well to state briefly the main purport of the letter. It was written ostensibly to describe to Father Dionysius the ascent of the Mons Ventosus (Mont Ventoux) in the south of France. Petrarch carried with him a copy of the 'Confessions' of St. Augustine, given to him by Father Dionysius; and, as he was standing on the summit of the mountain admiring the extensive view, and recognising spot after spot in the landscape through which the Rhone was flowing beneath his feet, his eye chanced to fall on the precious little volume of 'Confessions,' which, as he says, he always carried about with him. He opened it at hazard with the intention of reading the first passage he came upon, when, lo! his g'ance fell on these words: 'And men go about to admire lofty mountains, and the mighty waves of the sea, and the wide-spreading course of rivers,

¹ Epistolæ de Rebus Familiaribus, lib. iv. epistola 1.

and the space of oceans, and the circuits of the stars, *and neglect their own selves.*' 'I was confounded,' proceeds Petrarch, 'and angered against myself for admiring terrestrial things, when I might have learned, even from the teachings of Gentile philosophers, that there is nothing truly admirable save the soul, compared with whose greatness nothing is great;' and he goes on to expatiate on this theme, and to apologise for his appreciation of the beauties and wonders of creation.

And to the present writer it appears evident that this admiration for asceticism and renunciation, imbibed from the teachings of the Church, was at the bottom of Petrarch's struggles and repentance, and the terms of self-reproach in which he alludes on so many occasions to his love for Laura. Admitting that that love was tinged with earthly desires, and that Petrarch's position as a churchman and Laura's as a wife rendered such desires culpable, this alone will not account for all his utterances on the subject. Even after her death, in the pathetic inscription commemorating her, written in Latin on the first page of his Virgil, he uses this phrase: '*This strongest tie being broken, it is time to flee out of Babylon.*' So that he looked on the tender feeling with which he ever regarded her as a sort of bondage to sin. That is to say, the morality which had been taught him was continually urging him so to consider it; just as it urged him to turn his eyes away from the glorious panorama spread around the Mons Ventosus, and contemplate the state of his own soul. And the conflict between this morality of the cloister, and the tender, constant, poetic, human nature of the man, is a curious and touching spectacle.

It has been mentioned that Petrarch found friendship as well as love in Avignon. The friend alluded to, Jacopo Colonna, was of a noble, fearless, and faithful character, well calculated to attract the love and admiration of a young man like Petrarch. The circumstance which led to his sojourn in Avignon furnishes at once the key-note of his character, and a striking trait of those turbulent times. In the year 1328, the Emperor Louis of Bavaria was in Rome, where he caused a certain Piero da Corvara, a Minorite friar, to be proclaimed Pope under the title of Nicholas V., at the same time pronouncing John XXII. to be deposed as Anti-pope. Jacopo Colonna, then quite a young man, rode into Rome with a few followers, went to the Piazza of San Marcello, and then and there affixed to the door of the Church of San Marcello the bull of excommunication launched by Pope John XXII. against the Emperor Louis; read it aloud to the populace; made them a strong speech declaring the Emperor to be heretical, excommunicate, and a usurper, and Pope John to be the true

Pontiff, duly and canonically elected; announced himself ready to prove his words, *even with the sword*, in any open place (he was already a churchman, be it noted, and, although so young, held more than one canonry); and, finally, remounted his horse and rode off to Palestrina, no one attempting to molest him; although a short time afterwards Louis of Bavaria, infuriated by the account of this daring defiance, sent armed men to pursue him. Jacopo, however, got clear off; and Pope John XXII. at once offered him an asylum in Avignon, and bestowed on him the Bishopric of Lombez as a reward for his fidelity and courage. Such was Francesco's friend Jacopo Colonna. Petrarch accompanied the latter to his Bishopric of Lombez, a small, uninteresting, and insignificant town, which, however, was made pleasant to our poet by the society of Jacopo and of two other friends to whom he became much attached; namely, a young Roman gentleman called Lello, and a Fleming called Ludovic. Petrarch kept up a correspondence with both of these, addressing the former as Lælius, and the latter as Socrates;—probably in playful allusion to the philosophic gravity of his character. A great number of the poet's epistles, all in Latin, are extant in the collection of 'Epistolæ de Rebus Familiaribus, et Variæ,' of which several editions have been issued.

Petrarch passed the summer of 1330 at Lombez, amidst the somewhat dreary and mournful scenery of Provence, with its desolate *Landes*, its grey olive trees, and its tremendous *Mistral* sweeping irresistibly over the plains. In the autumn of the same year he returned with the Bishop of Lombez to Avignon, where he made the acquaintance of the latter's brother, the Cardinal Giovanni Colonna, and of the head of the house, the veteran patrician Stefano himself, who had come to Avignon to visit his sons. All this time the image of Laura was neither effaced nor dimmed in Petrarch's heart. He experienced all the vicissitudes and torments, the hot and cold fits, the settled despondency dashed by gleams of delusive happiness, inherent in such a hopeless passion as his. His brief absence at Lombez had done nothing to cure it, and he now resolved on making a more distant journey. It is probable that unrequited love was not the sole motive for Petrarch's travels at this time, for he appears to have had, all his life, a propensity towards wandering over the face of the earth and investigating new places. But it is also probable that he would have lingered in Avignon had Laura held out the smallest hope to him. Be this as it may, certain it is that he quitted Avignon in the year 1333, and did not return to it until he had visited Paris, Flanders, and Germany. One result of these travels was to make him cling with

increased pride and fondness to his own Italy. In a letter written from Aix-la-Chapelle to the Cardinal Giovanni Colonna, he says : ' Although I have beheld many magnificent things abroad, yet I am not ashamed to call myself an Italian ; nay (if I speak the full truth), the farther I travel, the greater grows my admiration for Italy. For if Plato gave thanks to the gods for this, among other things, that he was born a Greek and not an alien, why should not we give thanks to God for our origin ? '

It is to be remarked that this sentiment of proud and ardent patriotism must at this time have been founded solely on his knowledge of the historic glories of his country ; and, perhaps, on certain childish reminiscences of Tuscany. For Petrarch had not yet returned to his native land since he had been brought away from it by his parents as a child of nine years old. But when some three years later he did revisit Italy, the ardour of his feelings was in nowise chilled. On the contrary, the actual sight of Rome appears to have even raised the enthusiasm with which he had ever regarded the Eternal City.

The 143rd sonnet, which begins, '*Per mezz' i boschi inospiti e selvaggi*,' is a reminiscence of these travels made in 1333. In the course of them he rode through the Forest of Ardennes, at that time much infested by freebooters. But these, he declares, had no terrors for him ; his thoughts were fixed on his love ; he fancied he beheld her with a troop of damsels, and lo ! what he saw were but pines and beech-trees. He imagines he hears her voice in the sound of the breeze, and the leaves, and the birds, and the waters, that, ' murmuring, flow athwart the herbage green.' The English reader's thoughts recur to another and a mightier poet who also peopled the glades of Arden with the creatures of his fancy, and add to Petrarch's pines, and beeches, and murmuring waters, the

Oak whose antique root peeps out
Upon the brook that brawls along this wood.

On Petrarch's return to Avignon he found the Bishop of Lombez no longer there ; he had gone to Rome on matters of family interest. And in 1334 Pope John XXII. died at more than ninety years old. Petrarch took this occasion to implore Pope John's successor, Benedict XII., to restore the seat of the Papal government to Rome. He addressed an epistle in Latin verse to the new Pontiff, in which he introduces Rome lamenting the sad condition she is in, and conjuring Benedict to restore to her the honours of the Apostolic See. But the time for this restoration had not yet arrived. The new Pope, however, did more for Petrarch than his

predecessor had done; he made him a Canon of Lombez, and held out some hopes to him of a prebend. At this time Petrarch frequently retired from the smoke, and wealth, and noise of the Papal court to his favourite Vaucluse, there successfully to woo the muse by exquisite poems in praise of Laura whom he wooed in vain.

The celebrated vale and fountain of Vaucluse are known to the world almost solely by their connection with the poet. He might well have addressed to the waters of the Sorgue, which poured their silver streams through those green solitudes, Horace's apostrophe to the Fons Bandusiae, 'Fies nobilium tu quoque fontium, Me dicente,' Petrarch bought a small house and estate there, which were for many years his favourite resort. In his days there existed near at hand a magnificent forest of oaks, which is now replaced by vineyards and olive groves. Petrarch's house, too, is no more. A farm-building of some antiquity stands upon, or close to, the site of it; and all around are scattered amid the shrubs many laurel trees, declared by the natives to be lineal descendants of those which Petrarch planted. The laurel had a double claim on his regard as a poet and a lover. The similarity of name between this tree, sacred to Apollo, and Petrarch's Laura, has occasioned innumerable conceits and allusions in his verses, which are to the taste of these days more ingenious than poetic. During his residence at Vaucluse he composed not only a great part of his Italian poems, but also many Latin epistles in prose and verse—his works on a 'Solitary Life and the Peace of the Cloister;' and, above all, the beginning of his Latin epic, entitled 'Africa,' written to glorify Scipio Africanus who is its hero; and, here, too, he made the acquaintance of Philippe de Cavaillon, Bishop of Cabassole, a small town distant only about two leagues from Vaucluse. Cavaillon became Petrarch's dear friend, and the poet speaks of him as a 'little bishop, but a great man.'

But now, in the year 1336-7, our poet at length had the satisfaction of beholding his loved Italy, and that eternal and august city, so long the object of his enthusiastic veneration. He went thither at the earnest invitation of his old friend Jacopo Colonna, Bishop of Lombez, and he made the voyage by sea from Marseilles to Civita Vecchia. On landing at the latter place he found the country covered with lawless troops, the adherents of the two great factions which were then convulsing Rome and the adjacent country; namely, the Orsini and the Colonna. Petrarch, however, found a safe refuge at Capranica, under the roof of Orso, Count of Aguillara, whither Jacopo Colonna

and his brother Stefano, senator of Rome, came to meet him, and whence they conducted him to Rome at the beginning of February, 1337.

Five hundred and forty years ago many of the classic monuments were still standing, which were subsequently destroyed; and many more were almost intact which, although still existing, have suffered lamentable mutilation at the hands of men. Even Time himself was less relentless in his dealings with the grand buildings of ancient Rome, than were her ferocious and lawless sons. Even in the year 1337, much injury had been already done to them. Probably many monuments were more encumbered by parasitic edifices clinging to and disfiguring them than is now the case; and the general squalor of the city must certainly have been greater. But, nevertheless, we may envy Petrarch his view of some of them. Take, for instance, the Coliseum. Even as late as the middle of the sixteenth century, although the inside was damaged (it had been used as a fortress by the Frangipani, a warlike clan of mediæval barons), yet 'the exterior circumference of 1,612 feet was still entire and inviolate; a triple elevation of fourscore arches, which rose to the height of 108 feet.'¹ Can we fancy the effect of this glorious pile upon a mind at once fervently patriotic, highly cultured, and distinctively poetic, as was Francis Petrarch's?

In a most interesting little letter, addressed to the Cardinal Giovanni Colonna, he says: 'You thought that I should write some great thing on reaching Rome. Probably there is much matter for future writing in what is presented to me; but for the present I dare not begin anything, *overwhelmed as I am by the marvel and vastness of so many mighty things*. . . . You were wont, you remember, to dissuade me from coming, on this ground specially: lest the aspect of the ruinous city, not answering to its fame, nor to the opinion I had conceived of it from books, should slake my ardour. And I, too, although burning with desire, not unwillingly lingered, fearing lest the image I had formed in my mind should be weakened by the testimony of my eyes, and the reality of things, ever hostile to their great reputation. But that reality (wonderful to say!) diminished nothing, but magnified everything. For truly Rome was, and its ruins are, greater than I had imagined.'²

This letter bears date, 'Rome. The Ides of March. In the Capitol.' And it is known to have been written in 1337. In another epistle to the same Cardinal Giovanni Colonna, written long afterwards, he laments the ignorance of the Romans about

¹ Gibbon, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, ch. lxxi.

² *Epistolæ de Reb. Fam.* lib. ii. ep. 14.

their native city, and speaks of the Cardinal's knowledge on the subject as a rare thing, and as being due 'not to your being a Roman citizen, but because you were curious in such matters even from your earliest years. For who at the present day are more ignorant of Roman matters than the Roman citizens? I speak it reluctantly. Nowhere is Rome less known than in Rome itself.' Then follows an exquisite passage which, in an attempt to recall some of the homes and haunts of our poet, I may venture to translate in full. 'We used,' he says, reminding the Cardinal of their former time together in Rome, 'after the fatigue of wandering about the immense city, often to make a halt at the Baths of Diocletian, and sometimes to ascend to the vaulted roof of that once most magnificent edifice; for nowhere is there sweeter air, a wider prospect, more silence and desirable solitude. There came to us no talk of business nor of private matters, nor of the affairs of the Commonwealth, which we had often enough grieved over. And wandering among the crumbling walls, or sitting on the roof, the fragments of the ruin were beneath our eyes. We used to have much talk on history; and I was allowed to be the better versed in ancient, you in modern, story. (And those things which happened before the name of Christ was celebrated and venerated in Rome, we reckoned as ancient; all that has occurred since that epoch to the present time, as modern.) Much discourse, too, was held of that part of philosophy which treats of morals; and sometimes we spake of the arts and their inventors and beginners. And thus, one day, when we chanced to fall on the subject, you earnestly pressed me to set forth fully my opinion as to the origin of the liberal and mechanical arts, which you had heard me speak of at different times. I willingly complied with your request; for the hour, and the absence of petty cares, and the place itself, incited me to talk—perhaps too long; yet your attention proved that the matter was not unpleasing to you. . . . Now you ask me to repeat in a letter all that I said that day. But I must confess that I am unable to repeat word for word what I said. Give me back the place, the leisure, the day, thy attentive hearing, give me back the same vein of thought, and I shall be able to do all that I ever could. But everything is changed; the place is absent, the day has departed, the leisure is destroyed, and, instead of thy face, I behold only mute letters.'

Is not that a pleasant, pathetic voice from the heart of a poet, to reach us across the chasm of five centuries? We can see the two friends—Giovanni, the stately patrician, in his churchman's garb, and Francesco, with mild, handsome countenance under his sombre hood, seated side by side amid the ruins of Diocletian's

Baths, gazing across the same landscape to the same blue hills as now we look upon, seeing the same great arches of the aqueducts stretching along the plain, and yet with a world around them different in many ways from our world! Michael Angelo had not yet converted the Cella Calidaria of the ancient Baths into the church dedicated to Saint Mary of the Angels, nor planted the great cypresses which rear their secular bulk around the fountain of the cloisters. In place of the 'silence and desirable solitude,' which Petrarch found there, we have the shouts of men, the clattering of horses, and the shrill scream of the railway whistle, as a sinuous train glides swiftly among the grass-grown mounds of ruin, and the panting engine leaves a stain of cloudy breath behind it on the luminous sky.

About four years after his first visit to Rome, Petrarch returned thither to receive the highest mark of honour which the world could bestow on a poet: namely, to be crowned with laurel in the Capitol. By a strange chance, he received on the same day (August 24, 1340), in his retreat at Vauchuse, two missives—one from the Roman Senate, and the other from Robert de' Bardi, Chancellor of the University of Paris—inviting him to receive the laurel crown in their respective cities. One can scarcely believe that he should have hesitated between the two; but he certainly wrote to his friend Cardinal Colonna, to ask his advice about the choice of honours. The Cardinal, of course, declared for Rome. Petrarch's reply to his decision is extant; in which he says to Colonna, 'I not only receive, but embrace, your counsel.'¹ And very shortly he set off for Italy. He did not, however, proceed at once to Rome, but went first to Naples to the court of King Robert, with whom he had already had some literary correspondence. This sovereign was a lover of learning and the arts, and a patron of men of letters; and Petrarch declared that he would not accept the laurel crown until he should have undergone an examination by King Robert, and been pronounced by him worthy of that high honour. To our minds it seems strange that a pedantic catechism on subjects touching the erudition of the time should be supposed to be a due prologue to the bestowal of the poetic crown. But there is no reason to suppose the proceeding to have appeared in the same light to Petrarch and his contemporaries. Subdivision of labour is, in many departments of human achievement, a very modern invention. And the subdivision of authors into historians, philosophers, poets, moralists, novelists, and so forth, was by no means strictly observed in the fourteenth century. The mere mechanical art of writing was a rather rare accomplish-

¹ Epist. Reb. Fam. lib. iv. ep. 5. *lib. v. ep. 1*

ment, and the invention of the things written was looked upon by all men, save the most enlightened of their species, as being invested with something like magical mystery—as being, in short, to use the Scottish phrase, ‘no canny.’ It mattered little whether a man composed an epic poem, or compiled an historic chronicle, the feats were almost equally marvellous. And it is a fact that Innocent VI., who reigned over Christendom from the year 1352 to 1362, believed Petrarch to be a magician, and chiefly founded his belief on Petrarch’s constant study of the works of another well-known disciple of the Black Art—Virgil!

At all events, reasonably or unreasonably, the great examination for a place on Parnassus was duly and gravely held. King Robert publicly questioned the poet, on three successive days, upon literature, history, and philosophy. On the third day he solemnly declared him worthy of the laurel crown, embraced him, took his own mantle from his shoulders, and, placing it on those of the poet, begged him to wear it on the day of his coronation in the Capitol. This great ceremony took place on Easter Day, April 8, 1341, in presence of an innumerable multitude. A full description of it—too full for our space—exists in a fragment of a contemporary chronicle in Muratori’s collection of ‘*Rerum Italicarum Scriptores*.’ Petrarch, robed in King Robert’s royal mantle, walked amidst six of the principal Roman citizens, all dressed in green, and preceded by twelve youths of fifteen, selected from among the most illustrious families, and attired in scarlet. The senator Orso, Count of Anguillara, followed, with a numerous company of ‘potent, grave, and reverend signiors;’ and behind them came the curious populace, surging like a sea. Think of it all, under an April sky in Rome! What a vision of life, and light, and colour! What a tumult of emotions, from the ignorant excitement of the crowd, intent merely, as their pagan forefathers might have been, upon the bravery of the show, to the intelligent sympathy of a Giovanni Colonna, the patriotic aspirations of less learned patricians proud to call themselves *cives Romani*, and the beating heart of the poet striving with exultation and regretful love, and the underlying sadness conscious of that ‘bitter something’ which flavours most human triumphs to the sensitive soul! That Petrarch tasted it, we know on his own testimony; for he writes: ‘That crown neither rendered me more learned nor more eloquent, and only served to raise up envy against me and rob me of my peace.’

Nevertheless the triumph had been enjoyed, and the very fact of its exciting so much envy testified that it was held to be a great one. Petrarch did not remain long in Rome after his coronation

in the Capitol ; but departed for Parma, where he visited his friend Azzo da Correggio. Here he remained about a year, having first hired, and then bought, a small house with a garden attached to it. In this place, where he seems to have enjoyed peace and leisure, he completed his Latin epic '*Africa*.' The year thus employed would probably have been one of the most tranquilly contented of his life, had it not been troubled by the loss of several of his dear friends. Petrarch was peculiarly affectionate. He loved his friends with a rare constancy and warmth ; the death of three of them—a college companion at Bologna, Father Dionysius, and the Bishop of Lombez, best beloved of them all—within a short time, so afflicted and shook him, that he declares he could not at this time open a letter without trembling and turning pale.

He was called away from Parma to fulfil an honourable mission, but one which did not succeed in its object. Clement VI. had been elected Pope after the death of Benedict XII. (1342), and the Romans sent to the new Pontiff a deputation of eighteen of their chief citizens, to prefer several petitions, and especially to implore the return of the Papal court from Avignon to Rome. Petrarch, who had had the citizenship of Rome conferred on him at his coronation, was named a member of the deputation, and charged to deliver a persuasive harangue to the Pope on this occasion. He fulfilled his task with his usual eloquence, and more than his usual enthusiasm, for the return of the Pope to Rome was a matter he had greatly at heart. But the time had not yet come, and Clement VI. remained at Avignon. During this visit to the Papal court, Petrarch saw Laura once again. Time had not weakened his love for her ; but on her side it seems to have brought about some diminution of the rigid severity with which she had hitherto treated her illustrious adorer. Not that she then, or ever, overstepped the limits of matronly modesty ; but she was no longer a girlish bride. Youth was gone, and beauty was fading, and the years which had robbed her of her outward charms permitted her, in compensation, to indulge her womanly sympathy and gratitude in Petrarch's society, without fear of misconstruction. To him she was still the peerless Laura, bright and beautiful, and worthy of his highest verse. He saw her with the poetic vision which sees truly, piercing through terrestrial veils. And let us remember that there are ninety sonnets, besides several other poems, written '*In Morte di Madonna Laura* : ' that is, after she had passed away from his mortal eyes, and after Petrarch had fallen into the vale of years. He never, we may safely say, forgot her, or ceased to hold her memory dear. Is not this true love ? The false cannot feign such lifelong fidelity. Many critics, even of those who admire Petrarch's

genius, complain of the pedantry and cold conceits of his love poetry. Doubtless, there is much in it which is discordant to our taste ; and doubtless, too, Petrarch, like other great writers, has suffered from the pestilent imitators of his style, who have nauseated us with repetitions and exaggerations of all that was faulty in it, without the excuse of living in the fourteenth century, or the more valid one of genius, which, like charity, covers a multitude of sins. But I must confess that, for my own part, I find real warmth and tenderness enough in these poems to vivify their formality. I feel the human heart beating under that quaint and antiquated garb. What can be more beautiful and touching than the first of the sonnets 'In Morte di Madonna Laura'?

Oimé il bel viso, oimé il soave sguardo,
Oimé il leggiadro portamento altero,
Oimè 'l parlar ch' ogni aspro ingegno e fero
Faceva umile, ed ogni uom vil, gagliardo !

Alas fair face, alas the sweet regard,
Alas the mien of graceful dignity,
Alas the speech, which natures fierce and hard
Made gentle, and bade vile ones valiant be !

The criticism on the first four lines, by an eminent Italian man of letters, gives one a shock as of a douche of cold water : 'There is small art,' he says, 'in all these "*oimé!*" but in vehement perturbations, as Tassoni admirably remarks, the lack of art displays feeling ; inasmuch,' &c. These critical commentators are at least not open to the charge of vivisection. They kill the poetry first, and then they cut it up.

In 1343 Petrarch was sent by Pope Clement on a special mission to the court of Naples. King Robert, the poet's old friend and patron, was dead ; and his daughter Giovanna reigned in his stead. It is not to our present purpose to expatiate on the political aspect of the court of Naples. But it may be stated that Petrarch found that court to be corrupt, vicious, and barbarous, and that against its corruption, vice, and barbarism his soul revolted and his voice was raised. In a letter to Cardinal Colonna he gives a striking picture of some gladiatorial games of which he was an unwilling and disgusted spectator, and where the ferocious and ignorant populace, following the example of their equally ferocious and little less ignorant rulers, hailed with frantic shouts of joy the slaughter and wounds of their fellow-creatures.¹ Here, again, we have remarkable testimony to the humanity and *civilisation*—if

¹ Epist. de Reb. Fam. lib. — cp. 6.

the word may pass—of Petrarch's mind, and of its superiority in these respects to the vast majority of his contemporaries.

The next four or five years were occupied in much travelling about the Peninsula. He visited Reggio, Modena, Parma, Bologna, and at length, in 1348, went to Padua, where he made the acquaintance of Jacopo da Carrara, who then and thenceforward honoured him as highly as was in his power. This year (1348) was the year of that terrific pestilence which, having devastated great part of Asia and the African shores, passed thence to Sicily and the whole of Italy, Spain, and France, spreading death and ruin all over the face of the land. Petrarch was according to some writers in Verona, according to Tiraboschi in Parma, when on May 19 he received the news of Laura's death. She had expired at Avignon of the plague, on the sixth day of the preceding April; and for more than forty days after her decease Petrarch had been tormented by anxiety about her, knowing that the plague was raging where she dwelt. Vain anxieties! The *'bel viso, il dolce sguardo, il leggiadro portamento altero,'* had already disappeared from this earth for ever. What words can avail to speak of the poet's grief, except his own most pathetic and beautiful ones? If the poems *'In Morte di Madonna Laura'* fail to excite sympathy, certain it is that my humble prose need not aspire to the task; and where they do excite it, they suffice.

Time and space inexorably require that the homes and haunts which Petrarch frequented during the remainder of his life should be enumerated as briefly as possible. He visited Venice, and dwelt there for some time on divers separate occasions, honoured by the citizens, and by the special friendship of the famous Doge Andrea Dandolo. The loveliness and charm of that most strangely beautiful of cities were thoroughly tasted by our poet; and he enjoyed there friendly communion with Boccaccio, whose acquaintance he had made in Naples, and whom he loved and admired with his customary generous affection to the day of his death. It is not uninteresting to record that Petrarch was enthusiastic in his praises of the story of Griselda in the *'Decameron,'* translated it into Latin, learned it in the original by heart, and declared that it had made him weep. In his will he bequeaths him a legacy in these words: *'To Master John of Certaldo, or Boccaccio (being, indeed, ashamed to offer so small a thing to so great a man), I leave fifty golden florins, to buy a winter robe for his studies and nocturnal lucubrations.'* Those persons who are familiar with the mode of life in Italian country houses even at the present day—with the chill brick or marble floors, the scanty furniture, and absence of fire-

places—will appreciate this bequest to Boccaccio, poor and studious, in his little dwelling at Certaldo.

We now approach the last scene on which Petrarch's eyes ever looked; the last home which he ever occupied. Amidst the Euganean Hills, and not far from the ancient, learned, historic, and picturesque city of Padua, lies the village of Arquà. Here Petrarch bought a plot of ground, and built himself a house of which he thus writes: 'Amidst the Euganean Hills, not more than ten miles from Padua, I have built myself a small but pleasant dwelling, surrounded by an olive grove and a vineyard which suffice for the wants of a modest and not numerous family.' And in another place: 'I have built myself a modest but decent house among the Euganean Hills, where I am spending in peace what little of life remains to me.'

It was on a bright and beautiful October day in last year that I first saw the spot so recently the goal of a European pilgrimage to celebrate the five hundredth anniversary of the poet's death. The magnificent Italian sun poured down its golden light, its cordial warmth, upon the landscape; and the softly sloping hills lay fold after fold before us, veiled by the most transparent autumnal haze. The air was still; the world seemed dreaming; now and then a burnished leaf fell noiselessly from the hedge; and no sound was heard save the thud of our horse's hoofs upon the soft crumbling soil of the climbing road, or a distant voice calling from some grey olive orchard. Petrarch's house—the house to which alone, as all Arquà right well knew, were foreigners' footsteps likely to be directed—stands high above the church and the group of poor tenements which constitute the present village. We walked thither, the road being too steep for wheels, guided by a barefoot, black-eyed peasant speaking the soft speech of the Venetian provinces, and willing to talk, as much as we would let him, of the great gathering at the poet's tomb on July 19, 1874. Yes; the world had sent a splendid embassy to honour one of its rulers, a crowned poet, higher than a king, and wielding an infinitely greater power over mankind—swaying their intellect, their affections, the better part of them. Fate embittered the great soul of Dante. Petrarch, more fortunate in this, had never known 'the whips and scorns of time, the oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,' which lacerated the high heart of the great Florentine. Sweetness and love made up the atmosphere of Petrarch's spiritual life; and sorrow only softened it, as the silver haze tempered and beautified the sunlight that day on his Euganean Hills.

There are the rooms he lived in, the little study where he died,

¹ Epist. Sen. lib. xv. ep. 5.

the garden which gave him grapes and olives, the view on which his eyes rested when he looked forth from the casement. His chair is preserved, and one or two other relics. His last years were tranquil; and he was found on the morning of July 18, 1374, with his head bowed down and resting on a volume he had been reading—dead. The volume was, according to the most accredited opinion, the ‘Confessions’ of Saint Augustine.

On the little piazza in front of the church—a natural terrace overlooking the valley—stands his tomb. But, besides this sarcophagus which contains his body, and the volumes which hold his mind, there exists another monument that bears witness to the gentle, kindly, charitable heart which ceased to beat on that July day five centuries ago. This monument is a fountain covered by a massive stone arch, wherein are collected five scattered rills which formerly trickled wastefully down the terraced slopes of Arquà. The poet gathered them into one ample reservoir, from which the abundant waters gush into a lower basin that serves as a drinking-place for animals. On the stone arch, restored in the sixteenth century by a certain Count Manfredini, vicar of the place, may be read the initials F. P. M. C., which record the founder and the restorer; and above is sculptured the following distich attributed to Antonio Querenti:—

Fonti numen inest; hospes, venerare liquorem
Unde bibens cecinit digna Petrarcha Deis.

(‘There is a divinity in the fountain. Stranger, venerate the wave whence Petrarch, drinking, sang strains worthy of the gods.’)

As we approached the fountain we heard women’s voices sounding through the still October air. A group of maids and matrons were washing linen there. One sallow, black-browed damsel had poised a copper vessel full of water on her head, and was about to bear it home. A thirsty dog lapped from the lower basin. Humble benefits these, conferred on humble creatures; yet perchance not less worthy of human veneration than the inditing of an epic about Scipio Africanus, or the erection of a column to celebrate some bloody victory.

GOOD STORIES OF MAN AND OTHER ANIMALS.

BY CHARLES READE.

10. *The Tilt.*

A YARN.

PART III.

THE boat proceeded on her way. Ellen pointed to windward, and said, 'See, Edward, the dark line is ever so much nearer us.'

Laxton turned his head to windward directly, and some remarks passed between him and Castor.

Ellen had counted on this; she availed herself of it to whip a letter out of her pocket, and write in pencil an address upon the envelope. This she did under a shawl upon her lap. Then she kept quiet, and waited an opportunity to do something more dangerous.

But none came. Laxton sat square with her; and could see every open movement of her hand.

They were within ten yards of the schooner, and the side manned to receive them.

Just then Laxton stood up, and cried out, 'Forward there, —stand by to loose the jib.'

The moment he stood up, Mrs. Laxton whipped the letter out from under her shawl, and held it by her left side, but a little behind her, where nobody could see it, except Castor. She shook it in her fingers very eloquently, to make that officer observe it. Then she leaned a little back, and held it towards him; but, with female adroitness, turned it outwards in her hand, so that not one of the many eyes in the boat could see it.

A moment of agony, and then she felt fingers much larger and harder than hers take it quietly, and convey it stealthily away. Her panting bosom relieved itself of a sigh.

'What is the matter?' said the watchful Laxton.

'The matter? Nothing,' said she.

'I hope,' said he, 'you are not sorry to return to our humble craft?'

'I have seen none to compare with her,' said she, fencing boldly, but trembling to herself.

The next moment she was on board the schooner, and waited to see the boat off, and also to learn, if possible, whether Castor *had her letter* all safe, and would take it to its address.

To her consternation she heard Laxton invite Castor to come on board a moment.

She tried to catch Castor's eye, and warn him to do nothing of the kind.

But the light-hearted officer assented at once, and was on the quarter-deck next moment.

Laxton waved the others to fall back; but Ellen would not leave them together: she was too apprehensive, knowing what she had just done.

'I have not the honour of knowing your name, sir; mine is Edward Laxton.'

'Mine is Dick Castor, sir, at your service, and yours, ma'am?' And he took this fair opportunity, and gave Ellen a look that made her cheeks burn, for it said plainly, 'Your letter is in safe hands.'

'Well, Mr. Castor,' said Laxton, 'you are the sort I want on board this schooner; you are a man of nerve. Now, I have never had a sailing-master yet, because I don't need one—I am an enthusiast in navigation, have studied it for years, theoretically and practically—but I want a first lieutenant, a man with nerve. What do you say, now? Five hundred a year, and a swell uniform.'

'Well, sir, the duds don't tempt me; but the pay is very handsome, and the craft is a beauty.'

Laxton bowed ceremoniously. 'Let me add,' said he gravely, 'that she is the forerunner of many such vessels. At present, I believe she is the only armed yacht afloat; but, looking at the aspect of Europe, we may reasonably hope some nice little war or other will spring up: then the "Rover" can play an honourable and, indeed, a lucrative part. My first lieutenant's prize money will not be less, I should imagine, than twenty thousand a year; an agreeable addition to his pay, sir.'

'Delightful!' said Castor. 'But they sometimes hang a privateer at the yard-arm; so I should be quite contented with my quiet little five hundred, and peaceful times.'

'Well, then, tell 'em to sheer off, and fetch your traps.'

'Yes, do, Mr. Castor,' said Ellen. 'You can send a line, to explain.' That was to get her own letter delivered, the sly thing.

Castor shook his head. 'Sorry to disoblige you, ma'am, and to refuse you, sir; but things can't be done that way. A seaman must not desert his ship on her voyage. Catch me in port, and make the same offer, I'll jump mast-high at it.'

'Well,' said Laxton, 'what port are you to be caught in?'

'Why, it must be London, or Hong-Kong. I shall be three months at Hong-Kong.'

Laxton said he had not intended to cruise so far west as that; but he would take a note of it. 'You are worth going a little out of the way for,' said he.

Whilst he was making his note, 'Bang!' went a gun from the 'Phœbe,' and she was seen hoisting sail with great rapidity, her rigging swarmed with men.

'There, that's for us,' said Castor.

'No hurry, sir,' said Laxton; 'he is going to tack instead of veering; she'll hang in the wind for half an hour. Forward, there! hoist the flying-jib and the fore-topsel. Helm a-weather! Veer the ship. Mr. Castor, bid your men hold on. We must not part without a friendly glass.'

'Oh, no!' said Ellen. 'I will order it.'

Some of the prime Madeira was immediately brought on deck, and, whilst they were all three drinking to each other, the impatient 'Phœbe' fired another gun. But Castor took it coolly; he knew Laxton was right, and that the ship could not come round on the port tack in a hurry. He drank his second glass, shook hands with Laxton, and then with Mrs. Laxton, received once more an eloquent pressure of her soft hand, and, this time, returned it, to give her confidence, and looked courage into her eyes, that met his anxiously. Then he put off; and, though the 'Phœbe' was now nearly a mile off, he easily ran alongside her before she paid off and got her head before the wind.

His mind was in a troubled state. He was dying to know what this lovely woman, who had fallen in love with him so suddenly, had written to him. But he would not open it right in sight of the schooner, and so many eyes. He was a very loyal fellow.

At a good distance, he took it carefully out, and his countenance fell; for the letter was sealed, and addressed—

'Lieut. Greaves, R.N.'

Here was a disappointment, and a blow to the little amorous romance which Mr. Castor, who, amongst his other good qualities, was inflammable as tinder, had been constructing ever since the Corsair's bride first drank to him and pressed his hand.

He made a terribly wry face, looking at the letter: but he said to himself, with a little grunt, 'Well, there's nothing lost that a friend gets.'

As soon as he had boarded the 'Phœbe,' and seen the b oa

replaced on the davits, the good-natured fellow ran down to Greaves's cabin, and found him sitting dejected, with his head down.

'Cheer up, Mr. Greaves,' cries Castor; 'luck is changed. Here is a fair wind, and every rag set, and the loveliest woman I ever clapped eyes on has been and written you a letter; and there it is.'

'It is from *her*!' cried Greaves, and began to open it all in a tremble. 'She is in trouble, Castor. I saw it in her face.'

'Trouble! not she. Schooner A 1, and money in both pockets.'

'Trouble! I tell you; and great trouble, or she would never have written to me.' By this time he had opened the letter, and was busied in the contents. 'It wasn't to me she wrote,' he sighed. 'How could it be?' He read it through; and then handed it to Castor.

The letter ran thus:—

'I have written this, in hopes I may be able to give it to some lady on board the "*Phœbe*," or to one of the officers, that something may be done to rescue me, and prevent some terrible misfortune.

'My husband is a madman. It is his mania to pass for a pirate, and frighten unarmed vessels. Only last week we fell in with a Dutch brig; and he hoisted a black flag with a white Death's-head and cross-bones, and fired a shot across the Dutchman's bows. The Dutchman hove to directly, but took to his boats. Then Mr. Laxton thought he had done enough, so he fired a gun to leeward, in token of amity; but the poor Dutchman did not understand; and the crew pulled their boats towards Java-head, full ten miles off, and abandoned their ship. I told him it was too cruel; but he spoke quite harshly to me, and said that lubbers, who didn't know the meaning of a gun to leeward, had no business afloat. All I could persuade him to was to sail quite away, and let the poor Dutchmen see they could come back to their ship. She could not fly from them, because she was hove to.

'He tried this experiment on the "*Phœbe*," and got the men to join him in it. He told me every word I was to say to the officer. The three who were put in irons had a guinea apiece for it, and double grog. He only left off because the officer who came on board was such a brave man, and won his respect directly, for he is as brave as a lion himself. And that is the worst of it; if a frigate caught him playing the pirate, and fired at him, he would be sure to fire back, and court destruction.

‘His very crew are so attached to him, and so highly paid—for he is extremely rich—and sailors are so reckless, that I am afraid they would fight almost anybody, at a distance. But I think if they saw an officer on board in his uniform, and he spoke to them, they would come to their senses; because they are many of them men-of-war’s-men. But, indeed, I fear he bribed some of them out of the Queen’s ships; and I don’t know what those men might not do; because they are deserters.

‘It is my hope and prayer that the captain and officers of the “Phœbe” will, all of them, tell a great many other captains, especially of armed vessels, not to take the “Rover” for a real pirate, and fire on him; but to come on board, and put him under reasonable restraint, for his own sake, and that of others at sea.

‘As for myself, I believe my own life is hardly safe. He has fits of violence, which he cannot help, poor fellow, and is very sorry for, afterwards; but they are becoming more frequent, and he is getting worse in every way.

‘But it is not for myself I write these lines, so much as to prevent wholesale mischief. I behaved ill in marrying him, and must take my chance, and perhaps pay my penalty.

‘ELLEN LAXTON.’

‘Well, Castor,’ said Greaves eagerly, ‘what shall we do? Will the Captain let you take volunteers, and board her?’

‘Certainly not! Why, here’s a fair wind, and stunsels set to catch every puff.’

‘For Heaven’s sake, take him her letter, and try him.’

‘I’ll do that; but it is no use.’

He took the letter, and soon came back with a reply that Captain Curtis sympathised with the lady, and would make the case known to every master in his service.

‘And that is all he is game for!’ said Greaves contemptuously. ‘Castor, lend me your arm. I can hobble on deck well enough.’

He got on deck; and the schooner was three miles to leeward, and full a mile astern, with nothing set but her topsails and flying-jib.

Greaves groaned aloud. ‘He means to part company. We shall never see her again.’ He groaned, and went down to his cabin again.

He was mistaken. Laxton was only giving the ship a start, in order to try rates of sailing. He set his magnificent mainsail, and foresail, and main-jib, and came up with the ship hand over head, the moderate breeze giving him an advantage.



Castor did not tell Greaves; for he thought it would only put him in a passion, and do no good.

So the first intimation Greaves got was at about 4 P.M. He was seated, in deep sorrow, copying his lost sweetheart's letter, in order to carry out her wishes, when the shadow of an enormous jib-sail fell on his paper. He looked up, and saw the schooner gliding majestically alongside, within pistol-shot.

He flew on deck, in spite of his lame foot, and made the wildest propositions. He wanted a broadside fired at the schooner's masts, to disable her—wanted Captain Curtis to take the wind out of her sails, and run on to her, grapple her, and board her.

To all this, as might be supposed, Captain Curtis turned a deaf ear.

'Interfere, with violence, between man and wife, sir! Do you think I am as mad as he is? Attack a commander, who has just breakfasted with me, merely because he has got a tile loose? Pray compose yourself, Mr. Greaves, and don't talk nonsense. I shall keep my course, and take no notice of his capers. And, Mr. Greaves, I am sorry for you.—You are out of luck.—But every dog has his day. Be patient, man, for God's sake, and remember you serve Her Majesty, and should be the last to defy the law. You should set an example, sir.'

This brought that excellent officer to his bearings, and he sat down all of a heap and was silent, but tears of agony came out of his eyes; and presently something occurred that made him start up in fury again.

For Laxton's quick eye had noticed him and his wild appeals, and he sent down for Mrs. Laxton. When she came up, he said, 'My dear, there's a gentleman on deck who did not breakfast with us. There he sits, abaft the main-mast, looking daggers at us: do you know him?'

Ellen started.

'Ah, you do know him! Tell me his name.'

'His name is Arthur Greaves.'

'What, the same that was spoony on you, when I sailed into Tenby Harbour?'

'Yes, yes. Pray, spare me the sight of the man I wronged so wickedly.'

'Spare you the sight, you lying devil! why, you raised your veil to see him the better.' With these words he caught her hastily round the waist with his powerful arm, and held her in that affectionate position whilst he made his ironical adieux to the ship he was out-sailing.

During the above dialogue, the schooner being directly under the

ship's lee, the wind was taken out of the swifter craft's sails, and the two vessels hung together a minute; but soon the schooner forged ahead, and glided gradually away, steering a more southerly course; and still those two figures were seen interlaced upon her deck, in spite of the lady's letter in Greaves's possession.

'The hell of impotence,' says an old writer. Poor Greaves suffered that hell, all the time the schooner ran alongside the ship, and nobody would help him board her, or grapple her, or sink her. Then was added the hell of jealousy; his eyes were blasted, and his soul sickened, with the actual picture of his old sweetheart embraced by her lord and master before all the world. He had her letter, addressed, though not written, to him; but Laxton had *her*, and the picture of possession was public. Greaves shook his fist at him with impotent fury, howled impotent curses at him, that everybody heard, even the ladies, who had come on deck well pleased, seeing only the surface of things, and were all aghast when Greaves came up all of a sudden, and stormed, and raged, at what to them was that pretty ship, and justly affectionate commander; still more aghast when all this torrent came to a climax, and the strong man fell down in a fit, and was carried, gnashing, and foaming, and insensible, to his cabin.

On board the schooner all was not so rosy as it looked. Mrs. Laxton, quietly imprisoned by an iron hand, and forced into a pictorial attitude of affection, quite out of character with her real sentiments—which, at that moment, were fear, repugnance, remorse, and shame—quivered and writhed in that velvet-iron embrace: her cheeks were red, at first, with burning blushes; but by degrees they became very pale; her lips quivered, and lost all colour; and, soon after Greaves was carried below, her body began to collapse, and, at last, she was evidently about to faint; but her changeable husband looked in her face, uttered a cry of dismay, and supported her, with a world of tenderness, into the cabin, and, laying her on a sofa, recovered her with all the usual expedients, and then soothed her with the tenderest expressions of solicitude and devotion.

It was not the first time his tyranny had ended in adoration and tenderness. The couple had shed many tears of reconciliation: but the finest fabric wears out in time; and the blest shade of Lord Byron must forgive me if I declare that even 'Pique her and soothe by turns' may lose its charm by what Shakspeare calls 'damnable iteration.' The reader, indeed, might gather as much, from Mrs. Laxton's reply to her husband's gushing tenderness. 'There—there—I know you love me, in your way; and, if you do, please leave me in peace, for I am quite worn out.'

‘Queen of my soul, your lightest word is a command,’ said the now chivalrous spouse, impressed a delicate kiss upon her brow, and retired backwards, with a gaze of veneration, as from the presence of his sovereign.

This sentiment of excessive veneration did not, however, last twenty-four hours. He thought the matter over, and, early next morning, he brought a paint-pot into the cabin, and, having stirred some of his wife’s millefleur into it, proceeded to draw, and then paint, a certain word, over a small cupboard, or locker, in the state cabin.

Mrs. Laxton came in, and found him so employed. ‘What a horrid smell!’ said she pettishly. ‘Paint!’

‘What, do you smell it?’ said he, in a humble, apologetic tone. ‘I thought I had succeeded in disguising it with something more agreeable to the nostrils of beauty—the essence of a thousand flowers.’

‘You have not, then; and what *are* you doing?’

‘Painting a word on this locker. A salutary word. Behold, queen of this ship and your husband’s heart;’ and he showed her the word ‘DISCIPLINE’ beautifully written in large letters and in an arch.

She began to quake a little; but, being high-spirited, she said, ‘Yes, it is a salutary word, and, if it had been applied to you when a boy, it would be all the better for you now—and for me too.’

‘It would,’ said he gravely. ‘But *I* had no true friend to correct the little faults of youth. You have. You have a husband, who knows how to sail a woman; “*suaviter in modo, fortiter in re,*” that’s the rule, when one is blessed, and honoured, and tormented, with the charge of capricious beauty.’

Then Mrs. Laxton took fright, and said, cajolingly, she really believed he was the wisest man upon the seas.

As he was, at all events, one of the vainest, this so gratified him that no further allusion to her faults was made that day.

The next morning, two sailors had a fight for the affections of Susan Tucker, Mrs. Laxton’s Welsh maid, whom he had made her colour, and rig out as Zulema, in that little comedy with Castor.

Thereupon Laxton complained to her, and said, ‘I cannot have the peace of the vessel disturbed by that hussy. I shall discharge her.’

‘What, into the sea, dear?’ said Mrs. Laxton rather pertly.

‘No, love. Though I don’t see why I shouldn’t launch her in an open boat, with a compass, and a loaf, and a barrel of water, and a bottle of hair oil—she uses that, the nasty little pig. That sort of thing has been done, on less provocation, to Captain Blyth, and

many others. No, I shall fire across the bows of the first homeward bound—'

Mrs. Laxton uttered a loud sigh of dismay.

—'And send that little apple of discord back to its own orchard in South Wales; he! he! he!'

This was no laughing matter to poor Mrs. Laxton. She clasped her hands. 'Oh, Edward, show me some mercy! I have never been without a woman about me. Oh, pray don't let me be alone in a ship, surrounded by men, and not one woman!'

'For shame, Ellen!' said he severely. 'You are a pirate's bride, and must rise above your sex. I devote myself to your service, as lady's maid. It would be odd indeed if a man, who can pass a weather earing, couldn't humble-cum-stumble a woman's stays.'

'That is not it. If she goes, my life will not be safe.'

'Not safe! with me to look after it!'

'No, you villain!—you hypocrite!—If she goes, my life will not be safe from *you*.' She was wild with anger and fear.

'These are hard words,' said he sorrowfully. Then, firmly, 'I see the time has come for discipline;' and, though his words were wondrous calm, he seized her suddenly by the nape of the neck. She uttered one scream; the next he stopped with his other hand, and she bit it to the bone; but he never winced. 'Come,' said he, 'I'll use no unnecessary violence. "*Suaviter in modo, fortiter in re*," is the sailing order;' and, in a few moments, she was bundled, struggling violently, into the locker, and the key turned on her.

Though his hand bled freely, he kept his word, and used no unnecessary violence, provided you grant him, by way of postulate, that it was *necessary* to put her into that locker at all. Only as she fought, and bit, and scratched, and kicked, and wriggled her very best, the necessary violence was considerable.

That was her fault, not his, he conceived. He used no unnecessary violence. He now got a napkin, and tied up his hand. Then he took a centre-bit, and bored holes in the panelled door.

This, he informed his prisoner, was necessary. 'Without a constant supply of fresh air, you would be uncomfortable; and your comfort is very dear to me.'

He then remarked that she ought to have a sentinel. Respect, as well as safe custody, demanded that; and, as he was his own factotum, he would discharge that function. Accordingly, he marched past the locker, to and fro, without ceasing; till there was a knock at his cabin door, and a sail reported to leeward.

'Homeward bound?'

'Yes, sir.'

'Then close up with her. And get my gig ready, to board her.'

When he came near her it proved to be one of Mr. Green's tea-ships; so he fired a gun to leeward, instead of sending a shot across her bows; and then he launched his gig, with Susan blubbing in the stern sheets, and her clothes in a hammock.

The ship, for a wonder, condescended to slack her main-sheet, and the boat, being very swift, ran up to her astern, and the officer in command of the boat offered forty pounds for a passage.

They happened to want a female servant, and so they took her, with a little grumbling; and she got her fare, or the greater portion of it, paid her for wages at Southampton. So I am told, however.

The pursuit and capture of the ship, and the hoisting on board of Susan, were all reported, during their actual progress, with great bonhommie, to Mrs. Laxton, through her air-holes, by her spouse and sentinel, and received with sobbing, and sullen tears.

When the boat came back, Laxton put on a bright and cheerful air. 'There,' said he, to his prisoner, 'the bone of contention is gone, and peace is restored—nautical peace, and domestic peace. Aren't you glad?'

No answer.

'Don't be sulky, dear. That shows a bad disposition, and calls for discipline. Open your mind to me. This is the cellular system, universally approved. How do you find it work? How do you feel, love? A little—subjugated?—eh? Tell the truth, now.'

'Yes; quite subjugated,' said a faint voice. 'Pray let me out.'

'With pleasure, dear. Why did you not ask me before?'

He opened the door; and there was the poor woman, crouched in a cupboard, that only just held her, seated on the ground with her knees half way to her chin. She came out with her eyes as wild as any beast of the forest, that had been caught in a trap, and tottered to a seat. She ran her white hands recklessly into her hair, and rocked herself. 'Oh, my God!' she cried. 'Susan gone; and I am alone with a madman! I'm a lost woman!'

Laxton pitied her distress, and set himself to cool her fears. 'Don't talk like that, dearest,' said he; 'a little discipline is wholesome. What have you to fear from a man, whose sportive ensign, no doubt, is a Death's-head and cross-bones, but his motto is "*Suaviter in modo, fortiter in re*"? Look here; here is an ensanguined cloth. Mine is the only blood that has been shed in our little loving encounter; the only blood that ever shall be shed between us, sweet tigress of my soul.'

'Forgive me!' said she, trembling all over. 'I was so frightened.'

'Forgive you, dearest? Why, you know a bite from you is

sweeter to me than a kiss from any other woman. It was rapturous. Bite me again, love; scratch me; beat me. Sweet, darling, Nelly, teach a brute and a ruffian to dare to discipline his lovely queen.'

'No; no. I won't touch you. You don't love me.'

'Not love you? Ah! cruel Nelly! What man ever loved a woman as I love you?'

'Give me a proof; some better proof than locking me up in that horrid hole.'

'Any proof you like.'

'Take me on shore. I'm not a sailor; and I begin to pine for the land.'

'Of course you do,' said Laxton, who was now all indulgence. 'Choose your land at once. There's Australia to leeward.'

'Yes; six thousand miles. Let us go to China, and drink tea together, dear, fresh gathered.'

'The desire is natural,' said Laxton, like a nurse making life sweet to a refractory child. 'I'll go on deck, and alter her course directly. By-the-by, where did that Castor say I should find him?'

Thus, even in her deplorable condition, and just let out of prison, did a terrified, but masterly woman manipulate her maniac.

But what she endured in the course of a very few days was enough to unhinge a lady for life. Laxton took to brooding, and often passed his hand over his brow, with a weird, terrified look. Then she watched him with terror. On deck, he went into furies about the most trifling things, and threatened his best seamen with the cat.

Ellen could hear his voice raging above, and sat trembling, as his step came down the ladder, after these explosions. But at the cabin door he deposited violence, and his mania took another turn. He disciplined her every day, and it seemed to cool him. She made no resistance; and they conversed amicably, on different sides of the prison, she admitting that discipline was good for her mind.

After a time, she would say, 'Edward, I'm sorry to say this contracted position pains my limbs.'

'We must provide for that. I'll build another yacht, with more room in it—for *every thing*.'

'Do, dear; and, meantime, I am afraid I must ask you to let me out.'

'Oh, by all means! Everything must give way to your comfort.'

Unfortunately, Mr. Laxton, as his reason became weaker, set up a spy; and this fellow wormed out that one of the crew had seen

Castor take a letter, on the sly, from Mrs. Laxton. This upset his mind altogether. He burst in upon her, looking fearful. 'So you write love-letters to strangers, do you?' he roared.

'No, no. Who dares say so?'

'Who dares deny it? You were seen to give one to that Castor, a man you had only spoken to once, you false-hearted, adulterous hussy!'

'It was only a letter to my father.'

'Liar! it was a love-letter. And that Greaves couldn't show his face, but you must unveil to him.—Damnation!—There—you are driving me mad. But you shall not escape, nor your paramours elect. I know where to find *them*; and *you* I've got.'

The poor creature began to shiver. 'I am full of faults,' she whimpered. 'Discipline me, dear. You will mend me, in time.'

'No, Judas!' roared the madman. 'I have disciplined you in vain. Discipline! it is wasted on such a character. I must try **EXTINCTION.**'

'What, would you kill me, Arthur?'

'Dead as a herring.'

'God have mercy on me!'

'That's *His* affair; *mine* is to see that you deceive and delude no more able navigators, and drive them mad. But don't you think I'm going to shed your blood. I'm too fond of you, traitress—viper—hussy—demon of deceit. And don't you think you shall die alone. No. You shall perish with your Castor, and your Greaves—cursed triumvirate! I know where to find them both. This very day I'll catch them, and lash them to the furniture, scuttle my beloved schooner, and set the water bubbling slowly up, till it sucks you all three down to the bottom. Sit down on that ottoman, if you please, loveliest, and wickedest, of all God's creatures.'

'I will not. I will scream, if you lay a hand on me.'

'In that case,' said he, 'you will drive me to a thing I detest, and that is violence.' And he drew out a revolver.

Then she put up her quivering hands, and, pale and quaking in every limb, submitted; she sat down on the ottoman, and he produced some gold cord and fine silk cord; with the silk he tied her hair most artistically to the table, and with the gold cord he bound her hands behind her back, and reduced her to utter helplessness. This done with great care and dexterity, he bade her observe, with a sneer, that his revolver was not loaded. He loaded it, and another, before her eyes; put them in his pocket; locked the cabin, and went on deck, leaving her more dead than alive.

(To be continued.)

Memory, Memory, faithful be !

MEMORY, Memory, faithful be !
 Oh, be thou a friend to me !
 I my heart's great treasure give,
 Ever in thy charge to live.
 See, what sweetest things most rare
 Here I yield to thy dear care,
 Shining hair of chestnut brown
 Sunbeams love to ripple down ;
 Ah, these dearest jewels prize,
 These turquoises, her glad eyes !
 To my curse I thee condemn
 If thou ever keep not them,
 That their fair heavens I may see
 When I not of earth would be.

Memory, Memory, why should I
 Bid thee hoard such treasures ? why ?
 These delights I give thee here,
 As to me, to thee, are dear ;
 Need I bid thee hoard her smile
 That thou caughtst to thee erewhile,
 The white glory of her brow,
 More than sunless to thee now,
 All the wonder of this girl,
 Arching lips and teeth of pearl,
 Dimpling chin from which I quaff
 Joy as deep as from her laugh ?
 These, O Memory, thou wilt keep
 Till, with me, thou lifeless sleep.

Yes, thou dear one, well I know
 All of her thou'lt treasure so,
 Hoard as misers hoard their store,
 Ever hungering for more ;
 Thou and I since first we caught
 This dear marvel to our thought,
 Since in her we knew alone
 All of beauty to be known,
 Kin in thirst that still her eyes
 Us may thrill with new surprise,
 Cry, O wonder, ever be,
 All unchanged, the thing we see !
 And do thou, sweet Memory, hoard
 Her from withering Age abhorred !

W. C. BENNETT.

Legendary Stories of Argyllshire Rocks and Caves.

BY CUTHBERT BEDE.

SAID a West-Highlander to me, 'Oh, yes! we have many curious stories about rocks. There is the Hangman's Rock, for instance. About a mile south of Inverary, on the shore of Lochfyne, there is a reef of rocks, called Creag-a-chrochadair, or the Hangman's Rock, because the gallows on which criminals were hung were erected there. A young girl was once executed there, many years ago; but it was a circumstance that was often told with sorrow in my younger days, and used to affect me greatly. She lived as house-keeper to her uncle; and, one day, wanting a half-crown for some personal use, and her uncle being out of the way, and she unable to ask him for the money, she abstracted it from his drawer, intending to replace it, and thinking no harm in so doing. But her uncle returned home before she had the opportunity to put back the money, and he discovered that she had taken it. In order to frighten her, and to prevent her from doing the like again, he put the case into the hands of the authorities of the district. They considered the crime to be very serious; for the law at that time was, that such a theft could be punished with death. When the uncle knew this he strove to release his niece, but the authorities would not give her up. The case was fully proven; sentence of death was passed; and the poor girl was placed in prison until the time came for her execution. Landed proprietors had then the power of releasing a criminal from the gallows. It happened that the laird of Askomil, near Campbelton, was then at Inverary; and a deputation came to him, asking what should be done to the girl. The reply of Askomil was "Hang her!" So she was hanged. Before her execution, the evidence that she gave of her salvation was, that when she would be expiring a white dove would be seen fluttering above her; and that Askomil would not reach home. These events came to pass; for, when they swung her on the gallows at Creag-a-chrochadair, a white dove suddenly appeared and fluttered over her expiring form. And Askomil never reached his home; for, when he left Inverary by water, a great storm arose, in which his vessel was destroyed and every soul on board perished. This story was very popular in my early days, and was often told to me by aged people, under strong feelings of pity.

'It reminds me' (he continued) 'of another story that we tell of a

rock on the isle of Ulva, called Chirsty's Rock, or Sceair Caristina, where a poor girl was hung, although she was guiltless of any offence. She was a herd-girl, employed by a woman named Chirsty; and this woman lost one of her kyloes, and accused the girl of the theft. The maiden denied it; but the woman thought to frighten her into a confession by placing a *toñag*, or plaid, round her neck, and hanging her, for a short time, from a rock. This she did; and, although Chirsty, afterwards, solemnly avowed that she only intended to frighten the girl, and not to kill her, yet either from the girl's struggles, or from the plaid slipping and tightening round her neck, it is certain that, when Chirsty drew her up, the poor girl was dead. Her neighbours and the relatives of the girl were so enraged at this, that they seized upon Chirsty, and bound her, at low water, to a rock that would be covered by the waves at high water. There they left her, while the hungry waves came crawling up, inch by inch, to devour her. The place where Chirsty hung the girl is known as Ari-chreag-nah-ighinn, "the Shieling of the Maiden's Rock."

These two stories, as told to me by my West-Highland friend, reminded me of some other stories narrated in connection with rocks in the peninsula of Cantire, southern Argyllshire. There also I found another 'Hangman's Rock,' so that it would seem to be an institution in that part of the world. It is at Dundonald, in the centre of the parish of Killeen, where there are some remains of an old castle of the Macdonalds. It was visited, annually, by the head of the clan when he collected his rents, and granted charters for land. These were couched in terms that were deficient in legal verbiage, as may be concluded from the following specimen: 'I, Macdonald, sitting upon Dundonald, give you a right to your farm, from this day till to-morrow, and every day thereafter, so long as you have food for the great Macdonald of the Isles.'¹ This mention of food recalls the traditionary story, that the farm of Coul, in Islay, was presented to a man who had given a flounder to Macdonald when he was much exhausted for want of food. The Hangman's Rock is a projecting cliff near to Dundonald, or 'Macdonald's Castle;' and it is to be presumed that those who crossed his purpose, or were behindhand in their rent, were swung from there after a very short shrift.

Some miles from here, but farther down, and on the other side of Campbelton, is the famous Dunaverty, 'the Rock of Blood.' The long peninsula of Cantire has its southern extremity in the Mull,

¹ The original runs thus:—'Tha Mise Mac Dhomhnuil a-M'Shuidhe air Dun Dhomhnuil a-tabhairt còir dhuit-se air do bhaile o'n diugh gus à mairich agus na h'uile à na dheigh co fhad' i's a bhios lòn agad do Mhac Dhamhnuil mór nan eileana.

in the appropriately-named parish of Southend; and one of its many bold headlands, on the eastern coast, is the rock of Dunaverty. From this promontory, the land recedes in a rocky semicircle to Kilcolmkill, where the ruins of St. Columba's Church still remind us, that the saint here first trod upon Scottish ground before he sought his final resting-place at Iona. Here, too, at Dunaverty, King Fergus I. landed, to take possession of the crown of Scotland. The rock of Dunaverty rises precipitously from the sea, which almost surrounds it, and slopes sharply but narrowly to the land; on the very summit was a castle—the successor of a Danish camp—the approach to which, up the sloping ascent, was protected by two or three walls, one within another, with a gateway and fosse at the outermost wall. This fortress, from its impregnable situation, was one of the favourite strongholds of the powerful Lords of the Isles, the Macdonalds of Cantire. Robert Bruce found an asylum there during those troublous times when he was flying from his enemies, and was safely taken from there to Rathlin Isle, off the northern coast of Ireland, and about twenty miles distant from Dunaverty. King James IV. placed a garrison in Dunaverty, whose governor, in 1494, was hung by the defiant Macdonald, in the very sight of the royal vessel. In 1504 the castle occupied the attention of Parliament, and in 1540 it was again held by a royal garrison. So much fighting and bloodshed ever attended the warrior Lords of the Isles that, although some Gaelic scholars would derive the word Dunaverty from *Dunamhortaemh*, 'the Rock of the Bay of the Great Swell,' yet we may readily credit those other Gaelic scholars who would have the word to mean *Dunamortaich*, 'the Rock of Blood.' And its best-remembered and most famous—or infamous—baptism of blood was its last, in the year 1647, when the castle, after a terrible massacre of its garrison, was rased to the ground, and the rock was left in its naked boldness, as we still see it to this day.

When the land of the Macdonalds was forfeited to the Crown, James VI. gave it to the Earl of Argyll; but Coll Macdonald—who was known as Coll Kittach, or 'the left-handed'—made strenuous efforts to regain his territory, and, after the defeat of Argyll, at the battle of Inverlochy, February 2, 1644, took possession of Cantire. His son, Sir Alexander Macdonald, was major-general under Montrose; and he and the Earl of Huntly were the only two chieftains, after the battle of Philiphaugh, who remained in arms against the Covenanters. On the defeat of Huntly in the north, Argyll and Major-General Leslie proceeded south to Cantire, and defeated Macdonald at Rhunahourine, in the parish of Killeen, not far from Largie Castle. Macdonald fled down Cantire to the

Mull, and sailed from thence to Islay, leaving his kinsman, Archibald Macdonald, of Sanda, to garrison Dunaverty with 300 men. Argyll and Leslie, with about 3,000 men, followed the Macdonalds, and laid siege to the Castle of Dunaverty, which held out against their repeated assaults all through the month of June and to the 10th of July, when the besiegers discovered that the heroic little garrison were supplied with water by means of pipes conveyed to a spring without the walls. They cut off the supply; and, when a gallant band issued forth to procure water from a stream at the foot of the rock, they were all slain. At length, subdued by the tortures of thirst under the July sun, Macdonald offered to surrender; but all his stipulations were rejected, and he was, finally, compelled to throw himself upon the mercy of General Leslie. That cruel casuist—influenced by the threats of Mr. John Nave, the chaplain to the Covenanter's army, who denounced upon him the curse of Saul if he spared these Amalekites—drew a distinction between his own province of mercy and that of 'the discretion of the estates' of the kingdom, and put the whole of the garrison to the sword. Many—so runs the popular tradition—were compelled to leap from the rock on to the sea-beach, where have been found, within this present century, what has been described as 'an immense charnel-house of human bones.' The massacre of the Macdonalds was complete; and, as the chieftains left no sons, the reign of these Lords of the Isles in Cantire ended with the capture and destruction of the Rock of Blood.

There were two, however, in the garrison, who escaped death. One of these was a young man named Mac Koull, whose life was spared by Sir James Turner, the adjutant-general of Argyll's army, who has left on record a full account of the siege of Dunaverty. He says: 'Then the prisoners were put to the sword, every mother's son, except one young man, Mac Koull, whose life I begged, to be sent to France, with 100 country fellows, whom we had smoked out of a cave, as they do foxes, and were given to Captain Campbell, the Chancellor's brother.' The other who escaped from the massacre of Dunaverty was the infant son of Archibald Og (or 'Young'), and grandson, therefore, to the elder Archibald Macdonald, of Sanda, who had been left, by Sir Alexander, in charge of Dunaverty. When the massacre commenced, Flora McCambridge, the foster-mother of the younger Archibald's child, fled with it, naked in her arms, and concealed herself in one of the numerous caves on that coast, until the troublous time was past. A tradition, which, it is to be hoped, is founded upon fact, tells, that when the nurse fled along the beach, she was stopped by Captain Campbell, of Craigneish—"the Chancellor's brother" just referred to. He

asked her whose was the child? She replied that it was her own babe, the son of a countryman. 'It has the eye of the Macdonald; but, no matter; it wants clothing,' said the captain; and, with that, he cut off the 'tail' of his plaid, and gave it to the nurse to make a covering for the infant. The child, thus miraculously preserved, grew up to manhood as Ronald Macdonald of Sanda, and married Dame Anne Stewart, sister of the first Earl of Bute. In connection with the traditionary story, I may say, that a cave, well-nigh inaccessible, on the rugged shores of the Moil (or Mull), is still called 'Macdonald's Cave,' and is pointed out as the place where the foster-mother concealed herself and her charge. I was told that Captain Campbell warned the nurse not to continue her path along the beach towards Kilcolmkill, or she would meet with General Leslie himself, who, probably, would not spare her or the babe. He therefore directed her to a place higher up the glen; and she took the path, and, eventually, gained the cave in safety, where some adherents of the clan kept her supplied with food.

The traditionary stories of the Rock of Blood are numerous. Lord Teignmouth, when he visited the spot, was told that a fine young Highlander, named Stuart, sprang from the rock and reached a boat containing some of Argyll's followers, who spared his life; and that he lived to be the first factor of Argyle. A Cantire correspondent has given me another version of this story: 'The man thus spared from the massacre is said to have been James Stewart, of the Blackhall family, Renfrewshire, who, when led out to be put to death, requested leave to first read his Bible; whereupon Stewart of Ardvorlich, who was an officer under Leslie, interceded for his namesake's life; which was granted, and he lived to be the ancestor of many respectable families in Cantire and Argyllshire.' Another correspondent writes: 'It is said that, as Argyll, Leslie, and Nave walked through the scene after the massacre, they were up to their ankles in blood; and that the general turned to the chaplain and said, "Now, Mr. John, have you not, for once, got your full of blood?"' It is also said that the garrison were kept prisoners for five days, in the fortifications at the foot of the rock, before they were put to death.' One version that reached me, as to the massacre, was, that Leslie caused many of the prisoners to be tied back to back, and flung from the summit of the rock into the sea.

The siege of Dunaverty left its indelible mark both on the history and traditions of the peninsula of Cantire. The Macdonalds lost their hold over the land, although, up to the year 1748, they nominally possessed the power over life and death, and regarded

themselves as the hereditary Lords of the Isles. And so it is told of a Macdonald of this period that, when he went to a dinner given by the Lord Lieutenant, and had taken his seat, being a late-comer, at the foot of the table, he was politely requested to come and sit beside the host at the head of the table. 'Tell the earl,' replied the chieftain, in Gaelic, 'that, wherever Macdonald sits, *that* is the head of the table.'

Another Cantire story shows the animosity that existed between the rival clans of Campbells and Macdonalds. The Mac Neills of Carskey sided with the former, and Neill Mac Neill fought on their side at Dunaverty. After the battle he would not allow the Macdonalds to be buried in the *kil*, but had them interred in a field on the sea-shore, which spot is now enclosed by a stone wall. The family feuds, however, nearly ceased through the marriage of Archibald Mac Neill of Carskey to a daughter of Lady Anne Macdonald and her husband Ronald, who as a child had been so wondrously preserved in the siege of Dunaverty. The place where his father and grandfather were buried is in a field on the farm of Machribeg, not far from the shore. Two flagstones, with a third to another Macdonald (of Largie, it is said), marked the exact spots, which remain undisturbed to this day, although the field has been regularly ploughed and worked. The stone wall was put up, by permission of the Duke of Argyll, by the present representative of the slain chieftains, the Rev. Douglas Macdonald, who inherited the Sanda property (the estates on the mainland having passed from the family) from his uncle, Sir John Macdonald, K.C.B., Ambassador at the Court of Persia. Professor Shairp, in his poem 'Kilmahoe,' has depicted old Ronald Macdonald telling the laird's daughter the history of their loved Cantire, and how the feud between the Campbells and Macdonalds raged hotly and culminated in the massacre at the Rock of Blood, where only one naked child was saved, to be, in course of time, 'rebuilder of the family name.' The 'strong-walled' Dunaverty never had further experience of siege and slaughter. Argyll burnt it and rased it to the ground; and only a few stones on the bluff headland now mark the spot which, for so many years, was a famous stronghold of the Macdonalds, Lords of the Isles.

According to tradition, Alexander Macdonald—who was known by the name of Alastair MacCholla, and who, among other deeds, had burnt a barnful of women and children in Kilninner, at a spot still called 'the Bones' Barn'—was desirous to help his clansmen at Dunaverty; but the piper of the castle, spying his approach, blew up his pipes to the warning air, 'Colla nan rùn, seachuinn an Dùn;' Macdonald took the hint, and escaped; and for his faith-

fulness the poor piper had his fingers cut off by his conquerors, before they finally despatched him. It is also said that Mr. Hector Macallister of Glenlussa, who had married the Earl of Argyll's sister, refused to fight against his neighbours the Macdonalds, and, thereby incurring Argyll's anger, had fled with his three sons towards Dunaverty, when they were captured near to Campbelton. Argyll's sister rode with all speed to the spot, but was too late to beg for their lives; for, as he saw her approaching, he bade his followers bring out Macallister and his sons, and hang them on the Whinny Hill. The men asked, 'Which of them shall be put up first?' 'The whelps,' replied Argyll, 'and afterwards the old fox.' He then welcomed his sister, and showed her the dead bodies of her husband and sons.

There are a great number of caves on the Mull of Cantire, several of which, besides Macdonald's Cave just mentioned, have their own particular histories and traditions. For example, there is the Piper's Cave, at Keil. To all appearance it is but a small one, as compared with some of its neighbours, more especially with the cavern that is but a few yards removed from it, the entrance to which is thirty feet high, and its width and depth of a corresponding size, so that it has been used as a natural fold for cattle, and, occasionally, as a home for gipsies and wanderers. The entrance to the Piper's Cave is far from imposing, its ragged aperture barely giving admittance to a Highland piper who wished to walk [into it] stalwart and erect, and with his pipes in full skirl. But what the cave lacks in outward signs of vastness, is fully made up for by its interior depth and distance; for its ramifications—if we may trust to popular belief—are said to be so vast, that, although its one outlet is at Keil, the other is at Kilellan, six miles away, while a branch passage communicates with another cave in the hill of Bengullion, a distance of ten miles. No wonder that such a place was said to be haunted; nevertheless, a certain piper boldly avowed his intention to explore the cave, accompanied only by a small terrier dog. The piper went in, and his friends watched and listened on the outside. The sound of his pipes became fainter and fainter, until, at last, when he was supposed to have got to the spot where the cave was said to be haunted, the pipes were heard to give a wild skirl, which was succeeded by a yeldritch laugh. Then there was an ominous stillness; and presently the little dog came running out of the cave, but without his skin. Moreover, he was never heard to bark again, although in process of time he obtained a fresh skin. The piper, too, was never seen again, although he is often heard under the hearth-stone [of a farmhouse at Kilellan, playing his favourite tune, and

stopping, occasionally, to exclaim, 'I doubt, I doubt I'll ne'er win out.'

This legend of the Piper's Cave is very popular, and, therefore, as may be expected, is told in more than one way. Mr. F. A. Mackay gives one version, in his notes to the Cantire poem, 'The Heir of Lorn:': 'There is a superstition existing among the country people, that if anyone ventures beyond a certain length in this cave it will close upon the over-inquisitive explorer. A piper of the Macdonalds is said to have entered boldly, playing "Cha till, cha till, cha till mi tuille" on his bagpipes, and was heard underground for many miles. He never returned, however, as the cave is said to have closed, and held him fast within its flinty walls.' Another version of the story was given to me by a correspondent: 'Two pipers, named McLeod and McCrimmon, made a wager that they would enter the cave at Kiel and would not cease playing till they reappeared at Kilkerran. The tune they played when entering the cave, was a beautiful Gaelic pibroch called "McCrimmon's Lament," the translation of the Gaelic words being, "McLeod won't return, and McCrimmon is dead." McLeod was heard playing this about half-way through the cave in Coniglen, where he is supposed to have shared the fate of his companion, for he was never seen or heard again. But a little dog, who had gone with them, appeared at Kilkerran, much emaciated, and without any hair.' Such are the legends of the Piper's Cave; and their popularity and peculiar form cannot be a matter of surprise when we remember the widespread nature of the tradition. In the 'List of Stories' that he had collected for, but had not published in, the four volumes of his 'Popular Tales of the West Highlands,' Mr. J. F. Campbell mentions one, called 'The Great Cave at Bolva,' and says: 'A piper goes with a dog to explore a large cave. The dog comes out at a great distance, with the hair rubbed or singed off his body. The piper is heard playing, but never reappears. Commonly told of caves and underground passages in the Scilly Isles, South of Ireland, Cantyre, Islay, East Lothian, &c., in short, wherever there is a cave and a Celtic population. (?) Æneas and the Sibyl, and Cerberus, Cupid and Psyche, &c. &c.'

There are many other caves, not far from the Piper's Cave, which have their own peculiar histories and legends. For example, there is Boes' Cave, near to the rock of Dunaverty. This cave was the favourite resort, for meditation and prayer, of the Rev. James Boes (or Bowes), who, as appears from the inscription on his tombstone in Kilkerran churchyard, 'was born 1667, and died February 14, 1749; was an extraordinary pious man, much beloved by his flock, whom he loved, as a faithful pastor, fifty-seven years.' I

have manuscript copies of the Presbytery records of Campbelton, relative to Mr. Boes' long ministry, but, besides being voluminous, they would be somewhat dry to the general reader; they include the arrangements made for building a church for him, at the expense of the Dowager Duchess of Argyll (mother of the great Duke John), who had Cantire for her portion, and lived for more than twenty years at Limecraigs House, near Campbelton. The memory of Mr. Boes lives in popular traditions, some of which relate to his presumed gift of second-sight. Thus it is said of him that, on a certain Sabbath, he continued walking to and fro on the green, apparently buried in meditation, instead of entering the church to commence the service. At length he clapped his hands, and cried out, 'Well done, John!' and then came to church and conducted the service as usual. Afterwards it was ascertained that a great victory had been obtained in Flanders by the troops commanded by John, Duke of Argyll, at the very time when Mr. Boes cried out 'Well done, John!' On another occasion his mind troubled him early on the morning of a Communion Sabbath that something was amiss, and, making search in the church, he found that the beams that supported the gallery had been sawn asunder. He ascribed this deed to the personal agency of Satan, with whom he had many conflicts. One of these lasted three days, during which time Mr. Boes shut himself up in his room and would not taste food. At his wife's desire a servant man took him food on the third day, but the minister scattered it on the floor. 'The devil's in the man!' cried the servant. 'You are quite right,' said his master; who then calmed himself, partook of food, and returned to his usual habits. Once when driven by a storm into Rothesay, and compelled to stay there over the Sunday, Mr. Boes, while preaching, espied his old enemy peering at him through a hole in the roof, upon which he addressed him, 'Ay, ye're there, Satan; ye kept me from preaching to my ain congregation, but ye canna keep me from preaching for a' that.' He then pursued his discourse as though no interruption had happened. On another occasion, when one of the congregation persisted in dropping off to sleep during the sermon, although twice aroused by the preacher, Mr. Boes, on the third relapse into somnolency, cried out, 'Awake, and hear this sermon, for it will be the last that you will ever hear in this life!' which was the case, for before another Sabbath the man was dead.¹

Another cave, also devoted to meditation and prayer, is higher

¹ Some letters from Mr. Robert Wodrow, on the subject of the Turner MSS., are printed in the Preface to *Memoirs of his own Life and Times*, by Sir James Turner, 1632-1670. (Edinburgh: 1829.)

up, on the eastern side of the Mull of Cantire. This is St. Kiaran's Cave, or Cove-a-Chiaran, called, in Pennant's narrative, 'St. Kerran's Cave.' *Kil-Chiaran*, or the Cell of Kiaran, gave the name to Kilkerran, by which Campbelton and its harbour was first known. St. Kiaran, the Apostle of Cantire, was a pupil of St. Patrick, and the tutor of St. Columba. He preached the Gospel in Cantire, probably as early as 536, and would, therefore, be the forerunner of Columba, and the first preacher of the Gospel in the Western Highlands. To him St. Patrick had given that copy of the Gospels which is now preserved in the library of Trinity College, Dublin; and when he died, about the year 550, St. Columba wrote a Latin ode to his memory. The cave that is called after his name is at Achanatonn, or 'the Field of the Waves,' on the coast by Kilkerran, a little more than four miles from Campbelton. The cave—which, by the way, is one of a series of caves—has been often described, from the time of Pennant to authors of the present day; as, for example, by the competent pen of Mr. Edward Hull, B.A., F.G.S., who sketched it and took its measurements. He says: 'It is hewn in Conglomerate, reaching inward to a distance of about 120 feet from the entrance. From the interior the southern extremity of Arran appears, and the entrance has a rude resemblance to a loftily-pointed arch. At the entrance the floor of the cave is about 12 feet above the present high water level, but it gradually ascends inwards to a height of at least 30 feet. The roof reaches an elevation of about 40 feet above the floor, and the cave itself is truly of ancient date.' Mr. Hull attributes the arched shape to a fissure or joint which offered a line of weakness for the action of the waves. There was a rudely-sculptured cross in the cave, and also a rock-basin holding water, that continually dropped from the roof. Pennant says, that sailors often landed 'to dress their victuals beneath this shelter.' The tradition is, that St. Kiaran used to send out an old horse with panniers, into which the charitably disposed could put contributions for the saint's sustenance; and that a man having put out the eyes of the horse it fell over a cliff and was killed. A serpent thereupon bit the man, who prayed St. Kiaran to help him; and the saint healed his wounds, though the man lost his eyesight.

A little way above St. Kiaran's Cave is the entrance to the harbour of Campbelton, guarded by the Isle of Davar, on which is a lighthouse. The island is about a mile and a half in circumference, and at low water can be approached, on its southern side, by the low ridge of rock called the Dorlin Bar, concerning which a very beautiful story is told in Professor Shairp's poem 'Kilmahoe.' The structure of the island is, for the most part, porphyry, the red,

green, and brown varieties of which are here seen in great beauty. The action of the waves, more especially on the south-western part of the island, where the rock is most precipitous, has honeycombed the base of the cliff into innumerable caves, some of which are of large dimensions. One of these, having a double mouth, is stated by Professor Nichol to be 130 feet in length, and must originally have been longer; he adds, that 'it seems almost impossible to estimate the number of ages spent by the waves in cutting out a cave of 130 feet in length in rocks of such hardness as the porphyries of Davar Island.' These porphyry caves have, here and there, been assisted by art, and communications have been made between them; but it is not safe for a stranger to venture to explore them without a guide to direct him through their mazes. The royal yacht, with the Queen and Prince Consort on board, was moored not far from Davar Island, on the night of September 17, 1847. It was stated, by Douglas Jerrold, that the Provost, on the evening of that day, sent the bell-man round Campbelton with the intelligence, 'the Queen is now in the Loch.' The real words, however, are said to have been, 'the Queen's ship is now in the Loch.' But, even if the proclamation was made as reported, it was not a greater blunder than that which occurred on the occasion of the Queen's visit to Aberdeen, when one of the official announcements to the public was, 'Her Majesty is now in the Dock!'

On the western shore of the Mull, washed by the Atlantic, are the Largieban Caves, which rival in beauty the porphyry caves of Davar, though they are only three in number. They are composed of marble, spar, crystals, stalactites, and stalagmites, and are situated on the south-western slope of Cnoc-maigh (or Knockmoy, 'the Hill of the Plain'), whose altitude is 2,036 feet above the sea-level. This mountain's wide base rises in a series of rugged precipices from the rough waves of the Atlantic, and the caves are at the foot of the rocks. The entrances are large and spacious, but the heights of the caves are variable; and it is necessary in some places to crawl on the hands and knees. In the large, vaulted chambers the stalactites, formed by the filtering of water through limestone beds, assume the most fantastic and beautiful forms. I was told that the Duke of Argyll took away many geological specimens from these caves, when he visited them in the summer of 1862. On the face of the cliff, above the caves, are two protruding seams of quartz, which, in shape, resemble the letters N and S. The summit of Cnoc-maigh is made the scene of the *dénouement* of Mr. F. A. Mackay's poem, 'The Heir of Lorn,' which was first published in 1850. The author stated that 'the catastrophe of the story is based upon a legend, the subject of one of the fables of

Marie, an early writer of Normandy.' The same legendary story was made the subject of a poem by George Meredith, published in No. 7 of 'Once a Week,' December 31, 1859. To this poem Millais supplied a wood-drawing, which he afterwards elaborated into that 'Crown of Love' which charmed the visitors to the Royal Academy in 1875.

There are many other interesting caves in Argyllshire and its islands, of which brief mention may be made. In the Island of Gigha, there are the Great Cave, the Pigeon's Cave, and the Squirt-ing Cave, *Sloc an leim*, where the sea flows into a subterranean passage, 133 feet in length, and, during a storm, is dashed forth in intermitting jets. On 'Jura's rugged coast,' there are upwards of fifty large caves, the most notable of which is called Uaghlamaich, which is about 38 feet above the level of the Atlantic, with an arched roof about 33 feet in height, and containing an area of 1,312 square yards. Two other spacious caves, at Rhuintalen, opposite to Colonsay, and at I. Columkill, on the north-east coast, are known as *corpachs*, or resting-places for the bodies of the dead, that were being conveyed to the burial-places at Oransay and Iona, and were frequently detained in these caves for several days, from stress of weather. Similar *corpachs* are to be found on the west coast of Islay; and in one of these, at Saneymore, many of the bodies were laid of those 240 Irish emigrants who perished in the wreck of the 'Exmouth,' April 27, 1847, on which occasion only three persons were saved. At Kildalton, on the opposite, or eastern, coast of Islay, there are some remarkable caves, into the largest of which—the dimensions being about 300 by 200 feet—the sea flows through a wide arch and a smaller opening. It is said to have been the scene of a fierce fight between the Macleans and Macdonalds. Fingal's Cave, and the other caves in the Isle of Staffa, 'the island of columns,' are too well known to need mention. One of them, called the Cormorant, or Mackinnon's Cave, bears the same name as the cave visited by Johnson and Boswell in Skye, where the laird of Mackinnon entertained Prince Charles Edward in his flight after the battle of Culloden; and where, in after years, the old laird is said to have frequently retired to lay down plans for the Restoration. There is another Mackinnon's Cave in the Island of Mull, so called from a person named Mackinnon, who is said to have tried to explore the cave, and never to have been seen again. The arched mouth of the cave is 45 feet high, but its depth and length have never been fully explored. Within a second cave is a stone called 'Fingal's table.' A smaller cave, at Airdmeanach, is known as 'the Ladder Cave,' wherein there was space for eighty armed men, the narrow approach to it being de-

fended by a breastwork, over which friends could get by means of a ladder. Many of these caves bear traces of having been human habitations, and are furnished with rude rock-tables and other conveniences. In the 'Nun's Cave,' at Inimore, many crosses are cut in the rock, supposed to be the work of the nuns who are said to have taken refuge in the cave, after the demolition of the monastery at Iona. In many of these places we follow the track of Johnson and Boswell, whom we again trace to the great cave of Beallachaghaochan, near to Barr and Glencreggan, on the western coast of Cantire. At Lochgoil-head, not far from the Castle of Ardkinglass, there is a cave, called *Uamh mhei Sain Reoich*, where the old laird, with a few followers, is said to have been concealed from his enemies for a twelvemonth, while some faithful vassals contrived to supply them with food during that period. In the same district is another cave, called *Uamh na plundarain*, the narrow entrance to which is hidden by heath and ferns, through which, when a person has crept, he has access to a series of caves of various dimensions, which are said to have been often tenanted by robbers, and on one occasion by the whole of the inhabitants of the neighbouring village, who had fled from the vassals of Athol when they made an irruption into Argyllshire. On the shore of Kilninver there are similar caves which are said to have been used for habitation in early times; and, in more recent periods, to have been the resort of smugglers with their illicit stills. In the narrow Island of Lismore there are many caves, some of which are believed to extend across the island from one side to the other. On the opposite coast of Appin is the Cave of Ardsheal, situated on the side of a deep ravine on the hill of that name, where a gentleman of the name of Stewart is said to have found a hiding-place in the troublous times of Forty-five. In the Island of Ulva, where the basaltic columns rival those of Staffa, there is one large cave, in the face of a steep rock, 60 feet deep by 58 feet wide, and with an average height of 30 feet. At Laggan Point, in Mull, the Atlantic waves have, in the course of time, tunnelled two great caves, one of which is 300 feet in length, and widens to 45 feet, with a height of 120 feet; and the other is 150 feet in length, with a breadth of 12, and a height of 24. These two caves are connected with each other, and bear the one name 'Odin's Cave'—a memorial, doubtless, of the Danish invasion.

The flower and the form.

I

SWEET-HEARTED maiden, in my June of flow'rs
 You are the rose
 Whose perfume strikes from misty, far-off hours
 And stirs repose.

II

I meet you by the winding meadow-brook,
 And pause and sigh ;
 A look of welcome to a lover's look
 Is your reply.

III

When was my heart thick thronged with joy like this ?
 I stoop to read
 The answer in your eyes—nor dreamed to kiss
 This kiss indeed.

IV

I take your hand. How soft and very fair !
 A jewelled ring !
 A jewelled ring I silently slipped there
 In leafy spring.

V

Sweet-hearted maiden, in the scent of flow'rs
 The past survives :
 I see you, and I live the perfect hours
 Of our linked lives.

RICHARD DOWLING.

Tom Hood.

Just ten years have passed since the last of a series of little reunions of social and literary friends, held as regularly as Friday came round, took place in the house marked number eighteen of the street in which I am now writing—South Street, Brompton. The host and hostess of these occasions, and but too large a proportion of the guests, have entered into the eternal silence. Tom Hood and his wife have gone; Morten, the artist, perished by an untimely death; Paul Gray, also an artist, was struck down by consumption soon afterwards; W. J. Prowse succumbed to the same malady at Nice; Tom Robertson, the author of *Society*, lived only long enough to witness the establishment of his fame and fortune. These Friday evenings had their origin in the consultations held over a periodical long since defunct—‘Saturday Night.’ They were honest, genial, and successful attempts to reproduce a species of social gathering which was even then obsolete, and upon a scale of sincere, enjoyable, and modest hospitality, which in an age of snobbish ostentation, when Bohemianism apes the airs of ‘society’ even as some society mimics Bohemianism, has become an anachronism. Any time between ten and midnight the guests began to drop in. The weekly holiday had begun for them, inaugurated perhaps by a visit to the theatre, to which there succeeded supper at Tom Hood’s. For those who had not gone to the play, there were chat and tobacco first. Then came the meal itself—simple, wholesome, and delectable. After supper there were more chat and more tobacco, songs, and recitations. Mr. H. S. Leigh was ever ready to ‘oblige’ with a melody, whose words and music were his own. W. J. Prowse, having done his journalistic work for the week, his eyes sparkling with humour, his whole face lit up with intelligence—a noticeable little man, upon whom true genius had set its stamp—would fascinate all who heard him with quaint, whimsical, witty talk, reminding one of Charles Lamb, without Lamb’s stutter; Tom Robertson would conceal the goodness of his heart beneath the veil of a rasping, defiant, and pungent cynicism; Mr. George Rose introduced for the amusement of the company the immortal Mrs. Brown; poor Tom Morten stood by the fire, his coat tightly buttoned, his pipe never from his mouth, suggesting topics for the muse of Browning, or a series of illustrations for Paracelsus; and upon the beautifully

mobile face of Paul Gray, as he listened to all that passed, was an expression now of Irish fun, and now of thoughtful intelligence.

Abiere ad plures: all that was most brilliant in the promise and performance of those days has followed the days themselves. In 1866 or 1867 the Brompton Establishment was broken up. Tom Hood settled at Penge, and for the 'Friday nights' were substituted the meeting of the 'Serious Family,' held on Saturdays at some chambers in Gray's Inn. The retrospect of the original gatherings may suggest a little picture not unworthy of a place beside that which Talfourd has left us of Elia's supper and whist parties in the Temple. A small society which counted two such men as Prowse and Robertson could not be called undistinguished. Of the latter it is scarcely necessary to speak. Twelve years ago he had just succeeded in making his mark as a dramatist. *Society* had been produced at the Prince of Wales's Theatre. The critics, animated by the jealousy of unsuccessful playwrights, had pointed out that it was faulty as regards construction and plot; but the public had decided that it was the best and freshest thing which they had seen for years, and flocked nightly to the theatre at which it was played. As for Prowse, his name has already shared the journalist's destiny. W. J. Prowse was in his way a genius, but he was a genius whose almost exclusive field of display was the columns of a daily newspaper. Nothing could have been more admirable of their kind than Prowse's 'Telegraph' leaders. That he took Mr. G. A. Sala as his model was inevitable. But while reproducing several of Mr. Sala's idiosyncratic excellences, there were beauties and merits even in his ephemeral writing which were all his own. He had not merely a keen eye for the picturesque, a strangely genuine and unaffected humour, and that aptitude essential to the popular journalist of approaching and introducing his subject from the most effective point of view; he had also a sincere and inborn sympathy with all that was good, noble, and pure in human nature, heroic in history, elevating and inspiring in everyday life. Coming of a respectable Devonshire stock, he was, as one of his friends—I think Tom Hood himself—has put it, quietly proud of belonging to the same county as Raleigh, Drake, and a host of the other naval worthies of the Elizabethan era. If in his writings there was a lightness of touch that was French rather than English, an incisive and weird humour which reminded one of Sterne more than of any author of British blood, Jeff Prowse was an Englishman of Englishmen in his appreciation of courage, chivalry, pluck. His articles on boating and cricket—on the latter subject they were always written with special and technical knowledge—were of their sort incomparable. Anything

connected with the angler or the angler's art he handled in the same fresh and delightful fashion. A truer fisherman never was condemned to the weary round of Fleet Street: a more enthusiastic cricketer never took up his residence in Bloomsbury. But there were times when the genial, tender, true-hearted little gentleman—and a gentleman in the highest as well as in the conventional sense of the word Jeff Prowse was—would go farther afield than this, and would take his pleasure with exquisite relish and enthusiasm in the haunts dedicated to the sports which he loved so well. Often was his line dropped in the Thames on the fine warm Saturdays of June; seldom was there a match of great interest or importance played at Lord's or on the Oval of part of which the gallant little man, with eager glistening eyes, did not contrive to be a spectator, applauding with the discrimination of the connoisseur the more delicate touches of play—the balls cunningly stopped or neatly blocked, as well as the dashing catches and the startling hits which were the subject of tempests of vulgar cheers.

Between Tom Hood and W. J. Prowse there existed a friendship whose peculiar closeness was quite intelligible to those who had studied the characters of the two men. Hood was a remarkably handsome, and was intended by Nature to be physically a very powerful, man. Naturally, too, though the sinister and even malignant influences to which he was too frequently exposed warped his feelings and distorted his views, he was kind-hearted, gentle, and affectionate. He was a warm friend, and was lavish in the generosity with which he assisted all those whom he liked and whom it was in his power to help. His tastes were for the most part the tastes of the English gentleman who has been bred in the country. He loved flowers, gardening, birds, cats, and dogs with a passionate and unfeigned affection. He admired feats of daring and skill in games. At Oxford he was somewhat of a *dilettante*, but he had brought away with him from the place healthy ideas and useful experiences. Prowse, on the other hand, concealed the heart of a hero in a weakly and insignificant body. He was short of stature and plain of countenance. His forehead, indeed, was noble, and his face was redeemed from ill-favour by the light which played over it from eyes whose expression spoke of intellectual power and tender magnanimity combined. Unlike as the two men were in presence, in brain, even in social education and knowledge, their natures were still traversed by similar veins. There was the same nobility in each; not a few of the same prejudices and tastes; the same high standard of thought and action was accepted by both. Prowse admired the manliness of Hood; Hood admired the genius of Prowse. Prowse was, moreover, incompar-

ably the ablest and most useful contributor whom Hood enlisted under his banner when he was appointed to the editorship of 'Fun.' Mr. H. S. Leigh had a command of versification and a quaintness of humour, both in his images and expressions, which were extremely valuable, and served to impart to the pages of what threatened to be a formidable rival to 'Punch' a piquancy of flavour which was unique. But the ability of Prowse was wider and more robust. He had infinite delicacy of expression; he had that indefinable something which is so rare, style; he had clear and available ideas of literary art. But he had also an originality of conception and a happy faculty of invention which render some of his earlier creations in the pages of 'Fun' not unworthy to be classed with those embodiments of audacity or vulgarity which are revealed to us in the pages of Thackeray. For instance, his Nicholas, the irrepressible wine-bibbing, mendacious, dissolute old man, who used week after week to address 'his noble sportsmen' on the subjects of the hour in the racing, the cricketing, or aquatic world, and who never to the last redeemed his promise of presenting the public with his treatise on 'Knurr and Spell,' was a conception that may be named in the same breath as Captain Costigan or Jeames. It was Prowse's ambition to write a volume of travels, and had his life been spared he would have assuredly made his mark indelibly in that department of literature. He was, however, not only an accomplished, versatile, and original author in prose; he was a writer of verse so neat and finished, so really pathetic, and so lightly laughter-moving, that one may venture to call him a true poet. Here is a specimen of his metrical performance of the more sombre character. It is called 'My Lost Old Age,' and appeared in 'Fun' about eleven years ago:—

I'm only nine-and-twenty yet,
 Though young experience makes me sage;
 So how on earth can I forget
 The memory of my lost old age?
 Of manhood's prime let others boast;
 It comes too late or goes too soon;
 At times the fate I envy most
 Is that of slippered pantaloon!

In days of old, a twelvemonth back!
 I laughed and quaffed and chaffed my fill;
 And now, a broken-winded back,
 I'm weak, and worn, and faint, and ill.
 Life's opening chapter pleased me well,
 Too hurriedly I turned the page.
 I spoiled the volume. . . . Who can tell
 What might have been my lost old age?

I lived my life, I had my day :
 And now I feel it more and more,
 The game I had not strength to play
 Seems better than it seemed of yore.
 I watched the sport with earnest eyes,
 That gleam with joy before it ends ;
 For plainly I can hear the cries
 That hail the triumph of my friends.

We work so hard, we age so soon,
 We live so swiftly, one and all,
 That ere our day be fairly noon,
 The shadows eastward seem to fall.
 Some tender light may gild them yet,
 As yet it's not so *very* cold ;
 So on the whole I *won't* regret
 My slender chance of growing old.

These lines were but too sadly prophetic. In little more than three years after they were written Prowse laid down his hopeful, brave, generous, loyal life at Nice, and modern English letters had lost a man who was head and shoulders above any of his contemporary colleagues, and who had in him the makings of one who, under happier times, would have permanently embellished and enriched English authorship in the nineteenth century.

The little poem which has just been quoted suggests one of the closest resemblances that can be detected between the temperaments of Hood and Prowse. Of animal spirits Prowse had a far more copious flow than Hood. His nature seemed literally to brim over with delight in existence. His sense of life and the fulness thereof were conspicuous in his manner, his gestures, his voice. Hood, on the other hand, though gifted with a keen capacity, as Mrs. Broderip has shown in her pleasantly written memoir¹—to which for the main biographical incidents in Hood's career I refer the reader—for enjoying certain aspects of life, and with plenty of fun and frolic in his nature, was generally grave and even reserved in deportment, and gave the impression that when he was most amusing he was most artificial. The essentially tragic element which was latent in Prowse's later verses, and indeed in most of his later writings, effectually concealed as it often was by the rich spontaneous overgrowth of drollness and humour, had asserted itself in Hood's work long before the worker had been warned by unmistakable premonitory symptoms that the end was approaching and the goal was fixed. Acute as his faculty of enjoyment both of the pleasures of the town and country was, intense as was the delight

¹ *Poems, Humorous and Pathetic, by Thomas Hood the Younger.* Edited, with a memoir, by his sister, Frances Freeling Broderip.

which he took in all the manifestations of rural nature, and in some of the haunts of men, Hood never had anything like the rich fund of buoyant animal spirits which was possessed by his friend Prowse to the last. His temperament was essentially melancholic, and with this melancholy was blended a perpetually haunting sense of tedium and ennui. The shadow of the dark valley fell upon all that he wrote, except when he was writing for purely comic effect, and the shadow was frequently deepened by the gloom of lassitude and languor.

The selection which Mrs. Broderip has made of her brother's verses furnishes an ever-present proof of this. Take such lines as these, from a poem entitled 'Going to Pieces':—

When o'er my heart the death chills steal,
Ere the poor jester for aye deceases,
Grant, Gracious Power, my heart may feel
I go to peace when I go to pieces.

Or these—

For peace will be won when life is done.
Beyond the gloom lies the gold.
To us the hour of the setting sun
Has a charm that is lacked of old.

Again—

Once dreamt I, I should spread the sod
On Pegasus mayhap!
But woke to find I had to plod
Round weary lap on lap.
Well, let at last a graven plank
Record the end desired:—
'He who lies here to slumber sank,
For somehow he was tired.'

Traces of this kind of inspiration might be multiplied indefinitely from the volume which Hood's sister has so gracefully edited. And there is no doubt that the naturally sombre cast of his thoughts was further darkened by the personal losses which he sustained. Hood had seen all those of his London friends whom he knew best and liked most prematurely drop off. Wherever he turned he was beset by memories of those who had gone before, and to this feeling he has given very pathetic utterance in 'Copy: a Jester's In Memoriam:'

And yet the task at times is hard:
I turn my papers o'er—
To come upon a black-edged card:
Poor Tom! my heart is sore
To think upon that vacant chair.

What, not a jest or pun at call?
 Nay, read the journals through:
 My eyes upon a *journal* fall
 That tells, dear Jack, of you!

Yon picture, Paul, your pencil drew;
 That poem, Jeff, you penned it.
 Is there much 'copy' more to do?
 A man so longs to end it!
 Is there a world beyond the—pun,
 And free from verses sloppy?
 Because, if so, I own, for one,
 I'm getting tired of 'copy'!

As regards the selection itself which Mrs. Broderip has made, though a fairly representative one, it is probably not so good as it might have been. For parody, as is shown by the caricature of Mr. Browning, 'Poets and Linnets,' Tom Hood had something like a genius, and 'Vere Vereker's Vengeance,' quite his smartest and most amusing work, contains some quite admirable burlesques of Tennyson and Longfellow. Those who consider Mr. Gilbert's 'Bab Ballads' triumphs of wild originality may care to know that the first idea of these drolleries was started by Tom Hood: *e.g.* 'A Norse Ballad,' p. 55, and 'Hardicanute,' p. 125; and if anyone is curious to see how successfully the younger Hood can reproduce the most characteristic vein of his father, an example will be found in the 'Pointsman's Plea.'

Nothing can be more unsatisfactory than the speculation as to what an individual man of letters might, under different and more congenial circumstances, have done. Usually, it will be found that whatever the conditions or the particular department to which he may devote himself, the writer does the best that he is capable of doing. It is, however, difficult to survey the career of Tom Hood, or such monuments of it as are left to us, without feeling that he had partially mistaken his vocation, and that he was really intended for much higher things. The 'Song of the Lark in the City,' for instance, which Mrs. Broderip does well to give, is a beautiful little poem, full of melody, and full of touching thought. But it is not comic, and poor Tom Hood believed that it was his mission to be comic. It says much for his cleverness and versatility that he succeeded in being as comic as he was. From the first he seems to have fixed his attention too unreservedly on one aspect of the genius of his father. In this he only followed, and was no doubt influenced by, the public taste. When he commenced his literary life it was in the character of a more or less comic writer. He was thrown into the society of men who thought that a poor pun was humour, and who were unaware of

the distinction between antithesis and epigram. Moreover Tom Hood, though in one sense the most industrious of modern writers, was in another the least enterprising. His abilities were really good; he had a genuine insight into literary beauties; he had an appreciation of style; he had gone through much desultory reading, and he had profited by it. If he had, when he began his life as a man of letters, betaken himself to a more severe kind of literary effort, he would assuredly have made his mark. In a volume of miscellanies which he published some sixteen years ago, entitled 'Quips and Cranks,' is a delightful essay on Edmund Waller; and a more youthful composition, which was never published at all, 'The Poets in the Valley of the Shadow,' *à propos* of the different manners in which death is treated by the poets—a lecture delivered in Cornwall—is full of discriminating judgment and rich in promise. The gifts apparent in both these *opuscula* Tom Hood did not continue to cultivate. Instead, he gave himself up to the authorship of what, it must be confessed, are only second-rate stories and novels, and of verses which he could run off by the hundred, *stans pede in uno*. No more ingenious or more fluently productive writer ever lived. Children's rhymes, metrical adaptations of old nursery tales, old fairy stories, and old legends; magazine verses, written to impossible woodcuts; letters of gossip, and serials for provincial papers—these made the literary business of Tom Hood's life. And what a busy, a fatally busy, life it was! The frame of a Hercules could not indefinitely have endured the toils which poor Hood imposed upon himself. With more fresh air and physical exercise he might probably have lived to old age. He was powerfully built, he had a decided tendency to 'put on flesh,' and he never looked in really good health. It would have been wonderful if he had. From ten or eleven to four at the War Office; after that a few business calls, a chat with a friend in a club, or in what did duty for a club; then a cab home to a six o'clock dinner; after dinner a nap, which lasted till ten or eleven; a bout of writing, which, with the assistance of strong coffee, went on till four or five in the morning for weeks together; four hours' feverish sleep; then the War Office again, and so on *da capo*. This for upwards of a decade was Tom Hood's daily existence. Rather more than ten years before his death he left the War Office. But it was too late permanently to benefit his system. The seeds of disease were sown. The old habits remained. The customs of a healthy literary worker it was beyond his power to contract. Tom Hood was physically crushed and prostrate long before the end which he anticipated, if not with hope, at least with indifference, came.

To those who remember Tom Hood as the brilliant, handsome, dashing Oxford undergraduate, with something of foppishness, it may be, in his manner, but with a bold, open countenance radiant with intelligence, and a fine manly figure—a lad of whom it was said, both at Oxford and elsewhere, probably with truth, that he might do or be anything he chose—there is something profoundly melancholy in the retrospect of his hard-working career, with its premature close. As we look at the volume of verse which Mrs. Broderip has edited, and contrast with that what their author was himself, one is reminded of the words of the herald in the ‘*Electra*,’ ‘And now all that is left of the hero is this little handful of dust.’ Happily for those who knew the worth of the man, and for those who, believing in the Gospel of the Divinity of Labour, decline to think that any career of industry can be in vain, another and a more consoling reflection remains. If they cannot think of Tom Hood as having fulfilled the whole promise of his early years, as having been all that they imagined he might be; if they are compelled to remark that the conditions under which his character was destined to develop were but in a small degree calculated to nurture and encourage fine instincts and noble ambitions—they may on the other hand recollect—and of how few of those who have gone can their friends boast such a recollection?—that, in the face of obstacles and disadvantages, Tom Hood did an immense amount of honest manly work; that he laboured to the last with a true and brave heart; that in every relation of life, as friend and husband, he did what seemed to him to be his duty; that he was never consciously unjust; that he never did a mean or ungenerous act; that he was never so happy as when he was of assistance to those whom he loved or liked. The man on whose tombstone such an epitaph may be written, whether his career did or did not realise all its earlier hopes, cannot be said to have lived in vain.

T. H. S. ESCOTT. †

Golf Stories.

There never was a game like the old Scotch game,
That's played 'twixt the hole and the tee;
You may roam the world o'er, but the game at your door
Is the very best game you will see.

IN the annals of Golf are stories of many doughty deeds, but most of these, though done by golfers, do not come legitimately within the sphere of the game; yet surely since, in 1427, it was 'decretyt and ordanyt that the fut ball and the golf be utterly cryt down and not usyt,' many remarkable games must have been played. Not that that year was anything near the birth year of the game; *that* date no man can fix; many golfers being quite prepared to hold that the old Greeks beguiled their weary wait by many a keen game on the 'links of Troy.'

Perhaps the first event in the anecdotic history of the game is that Charles I. was playing on Leith Links when a courier arrived with tidings of Sir Phelim O'Neal's rising in Ireland. No doubt Dr. Dryasdusts shake their heads at this, but golfers believe it, and Sir John Gilbert has immortalised the incident—so, what more could one want? However, no one doubts the authenticity of the account of that celebrated 'foursome,' the Duke of York and John Patersone, shoemaker, against two Englishmen. In 1681–2 the Duke was Commissioner for the King to the Scots Parliament. Two English noblemen of his suite were one day debating the question with the Duke whether golf was an English or a Scotch game. To settle the point it was proposed to get up a match, the two officers against the Duke and the best Scot he could get. The story is well known how the best player of the day was Patersone, who after some hesitation agreed to play: how the Duke and he won easily, and how, with his share of the stakes, Patersone built a house, No. 77 in the Canongate of Edinburgh, putting on an escutcheon the arms of Patersone, and an anagrammatic motto—'I hate no persone.'

Though the stakes in this match must have been large, yet the amount depending on the result of matches must generally have been small, for when the Hon. Alexander Elphinstone played 'a solemn match at golf' for twenty guineas with Captain Porteous on Leith Links in 1724, we are told that the affair was so remarkable, on account of the stakes, that the players were followed round *the course* by the Duke of Hamilton, the Earl of Morton, and a *great crowd* of all classes. Eight years afterwards, on the very

ground where he had won this match, Elphinstone shot his man dead in a duel, while the other player in the match was the celebrated victim of the 'Porteous Mob.'

Golf has had many enthusiastic votaries, but perhaps never one so devoted, heart and soul, to the game as 'the Cock o' the Green,' Alexander McKellar, the hero of one of 'Kay's Portraits.' He spent the whole day playing on Bruntfield Links; even when night fell he could not tear himself away, but played the 'short holes' by lamplight. Yet, with all his excessive practice, he was by no means a dexterous player. As McKellar could not play on Sundays, he acted on that day as doorkeeper to a church in Edinburgh. One day Mr. Douglas Gourlay, a well-known club- and ball-maker, on entering the church, jocularly placed a golf ball in the plate instead of his usual donation; as he anticipated, this prize was at once secured by McKellar, 'who was not more astonished than gratified by the novelty of the deposit.'

Perhaps the most remarkable match at golf ever played was the one Mr. Wheeler gives, in his 'Sportascrapiana,' in the words of that veteran sportsman, Captain Horatio Ross. The match, Captain Ross says, was got up at the race ordinary at Montrose, by Mr. Cruickshank of Langley Park, and Lord Kennedy—both very good players. 'They got up a match of three holes, for 500*l.* each hole, and agreed to play it then and there. It was about ten or half-past ten P.M., and quite dark. No lights were allowed, except one lantern placed on the hole, and another carried by the attendants of the player, in order that they might ascertain to whom the ball struck belonged. We all moved down to the golf-course to see this curious match. Boys were placed along the course who were quite accustomed to the game, to listen to the flight of the balls, and to run to the spot where a ball struck and rested on the ground. I do not remember which of the players won the odd hole; the match was won, I know, by only one hole. But the most remarkable part of the match was that they made out their holes with much about the same number of strokes as they usually did when playing in daylight. I think, on an average, that they took about five or six strokes in daylight, and in the dark six or seven. They were, however, in the constant habit of playing over the Montrose course.'

The old Act of the Scots Parliament I have referred to above cries down golf and enjoins the practice of archery, that the Scots might be better able to fight the English bowmen with their own weapons. The penalties for default, and the time of practice, were not such as would recommend themselves to Sir Wilfrid Lawson and the late Sir Andrew Agnew. Every man who did not attend

had to pay twopence, which was spent in liquor for those present; while the day and the hour were Sunday afternoon, after service! Archery and golf were brought into antagonism in another way on Luffness Links on October 15, 1874. The 'Scotsman' of next day records this novel match. The Rev. Mr. Tait, chaplain to the Royal Company of Archers (Queen's Scotch Body-Guard), played a match with a bow and arrow against the club and ball of the veteran golfer, 'Old Tom' Morris, over the Luffness course. When the round of eighteen holes was ended, it was found that the bow had beaten the club completely, Mr. Tait having done the round in seventy-six 'shots,' while Old Tom required eighty-two 'strokes' to finish; by holes the bow won by five.

The dexterity and nicety of some players are well illustrated by that feat of a St. Andrew's golfer, who struck off three balls from one hole to another—about 500 yards—with such precision that, giving a uniform number of strokes to each ball, the three would so cluster round the second hole that he could touch them all with his club. The Rev. Mr. Carlyle of Inveresk tells us, in his Autobiography, how he astonished Garrick and some others at Windsor by the nicety of his play in driving a ball from a good distance through a narrow gateway. The late 'Young Tom' Morris could, it is said, drive a ball off a watch, as a 'tee,' without doing any harm to the watch.

Let us now glance at some feats, not in the game, but achieved by golfers with club and ball.

Just about a century ago—to be exact, in 1775—an English gentleman, Captain Topham, devoted six months of his life to getting up material for a book on the manners and customs of the Scotch. Naturally, his accuracy is not equal to his boldness; indeed, in several instances some 'pawky chiel' seems to have hoaxed the indefatigable Captain—notably his authority for the statement that Edinburgh people play golf 'on the summit of these hills,' Arthur's Seat and Salisbury Crag. But Captain Topham's statement is not half so funny as worthy Hugo Arnot's serious refutation of it. 'This observation,' says the historian of Edinburgh, 'is still more unfortunate than the general train of his remarks. Were a person to play a ball from the top of Arthur's Seat he would probably have to walk upwards of half a mile before he would touch it again, and we will venture to say that the whole art of man would not play the ball back again.' This 'venture' of Arnot's seems to have commended itself to the golfers of his day, but, in 1815, two daring members of the Edinburgh Burgess Golf Club thought they could do it. Mr. Brown, one of these, backed himself to drive a ball from the Golf House on Bruntsfield Links over Arthur's Seat in

forty-five strokes (the distance is nearly two miles). He won his wager; but a brother member, who attempted the same feat, failed to do it in less than forty-six strokes. Arthur's Seat is upwards of 800 feet high.

In 1798 a wager was laid that there were no two members of the above-named club who could drive a ball over the spire of St. Giles's Cathedral in Edinburgh. The society took the bet; Mr. Sceales of Leith, and Mr. Smellie, a printer of Edinburgh, were chosen to do battle for their club. In case of need they could use six balls each. The necessary elevation was got by a barrel stave, suitably fixed in the south-east corner of the Parliament Square. The balls were struck off in the early morning; both soared considerably higher than the weathercock on the dome, and were found nearly opposite the Advocate's Close; the height, including the base distance, is 168 feet. A suitable erection for the judges was placed up beside the weathercock, and they at once decided that the club had won the wager.

Thirty years later, two similar matches were made to drive a ball over the Melville Monument, in St. Andrew's Square, Edinburgh. In both cases the club and ball won; in the one case Mr. Donald Maclean, writer to the Signet, accomplishing the feat; in the other Mr. Skipsey, a clerk in the Exchequer, Edinburgh. This is a smaller undertaking than the St. Giles's feat, as the pillar here is only 136 feet high, and the statue 14 feet, in all 150 against 168 feet.

This Mr. Skipsey was a noted 'driver.' On one occasion he drove a ball upwards and forwards 200 yards before it touched the ground. Even a greater feat in driving was that of M. Messieux, who drove one of the old feather balls 308 yards on St. Andrew's Links.

On one occasion, at the Antipodes, skill at golf was of great service. The rains had so swollen an Australian river that the mail could not venture across. By no means could a rope be got across to pull the letters over. Guns, slings, arrows were tried, but all failed, much to the disappointment of the crowd waiting for the news from home that lay in the bags on the other side. At last a Scot, a keen and earnest golfer in the old days at home, volunteered to try what he could do with the clubs and ball he had carried with him to his new home. A long string was attached to the ball, which was carefully 'tee'd;' then, with a long, steady 'swipe' of his supple driver, the Scot sent the ball curving into the air, till it landed on the opposite bank, and re-established the broken communication.

We shall conclude with an extract from the minutes of the

Musselburgh Golf Club, where probably the question of ladies' golf—now getting such a popular ladies' game at some of our summer resorts—was first mooted. 'December 14, 1810. The club resolved to present, by subscription, a handsome new creel [fish-basket] and shawl to the best female golfer who plays on the annual occasion, on January 1 next, old style; to be intimated to the fish ladies by Wm. Robertson, the officer of the club. Two of the best Barcelona silk handkerchiefs to be added to the above premium of the creels.'

Life's Dawn.

FAIR Lady Patricia, sweet type of the spring,
The glamour of day-dawn is bright on your brow;
Your thoughts are as pure as the prayers which the birds sing:
God keep them, my rose-bud, for ever as now.

You're pleased with your splendour: remember, the rose
Charms more with its perfume than brightness of hue;
Its beauty is past when the wild winter wind blows,
Its sweetness remains, love, to charm us anew.

But young friends await you; be gay with the gay:
I speak not in chiding, but purely to warn,
For life's not all spring-time, we know wisest saws say,—
Prepare for life's night-time while yet it be morn.





The World Well Lost.

BY E. LYNN LINTON.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE PROUDEST MOMENT OF HIS LIFE.

THE evening on which so much depended arrived in its course; the curtain drew up and the ball which was the prologue of the play began. It was the most gorgeous affair of its kind that had ever been given in Grantley Bourne; and as Mr. Brown de Paumelle said with swelling satisfaction, when assuring each guest that this was the proudest moment of his life, no expense had been spared to make it go as it should.

The flowers alone represented a modest fortune; and the heart of the chandler who had the honour of the de Paumelle custom sat lightly on its throne by reason of the forest of wax-lights which illuminated the fact of Miss Jemima's majority. The refreshments were had direct from London; as indeed were all the appliances, including the band, and those pretty little artificial bowers which were set in corners and at the end of passages as suggestive retreats for devoted persons. The champagne was dry and the claret had the velvet on; and Mr. Brown de Paumelle was careful to tell the gentlemen when the time for refreshments came round how much each had cost per dozen; and that there was not a headache in a hogshead of either. He was careful too to tell them, each in a confidential manner—as if to him alone—how much the whole affair had cost; but that he grudged nothing, his motto being to do a thing handsome or leave it alone, and so long as they were satisfied—but he said 'satisfized'—so was he.

Partly for Lady Machell's sake, and partly for idle curiosity, all the great people of the county who had been invited came; and the fine names which rolled through the rooms were as pleasant to the ears of Mr. Brown de Paumelle, as was ever the smoke of incense to the nostrils of a god. He stood by the door of the first drawing-room, radiant, shining, ecstatic. He felt it truly, as he said it was, the proudest moment of his life; and he showed that he did. As name after name—some titles, some the names of the oldest families in the county—was shouted by the small army of footmen stationed at intervals from the hall to the drawing-room, till it finally came to the majestic groom of the

chambers himself, the face of the retired soap-boiler grew more and more rubicund, his manner more triumphant, his heart more elate.

He was a small stout man, with a tendency to grow warm, and an inveterate habit of holding those to whom he talked by the arm. Ladies with short sleeves did not like it. His new black coat, evidently so new, shone in the light; his black satin waistcoat glistened, and his chain and rings and big diamond studs glittered and sparkled as he bowed and smirked, and rubbed his own hands with satisfaction after he had shaken those of his guests with effusion. In one thing only was he disobedient to the great goddess of form; he would not wear his white kid gloves, but kept them dangling in one hand or thrust into the bosom of his vest. He had once seen a young Frenchman do this; and the trick had taken his fancy, both as 'nobby,' according to his phraseology, and less troublesome to himself.

By his side stood his wife and daughter; pale where he was flushed; timid to his pride; shrinking, nervous, depressed, not self-confident, jovial, glad as he. Both were dressed in exquisite taste, so far as the mere style and material of their garments went: Lady Machell had taken care of that: but Mrs. Brown de Paumelle's dead-leaf and gold, and Jemima's white and silver, though made by Worth himself, looked more out of keeping with their meagre awkward persons than if they had been clothed according to their own ideas. These would have given them a 'full puce' for the mother, and a 'grass green' for the daughter, made by a local dressmaker after the most elaborate of the two figures in a fashion-book, and largely trimmed with modern point. Do what you would with them, you could not bring them up to the standard. Their heads were dressed according to the correctest canons of the art; they had not a faulty point about them; down to their very shoe-buckles and their glove-buttons, their get-up was perfect. And yet it wanted no magician to see, as they stood there, that they were mere clothes-horses decked to order—well decked if you will—but none other than clothes-horses, when all was done. They felt themselves to be shams and out of place, for all that they had said one to the other admiringly: 'La! ma, how splendid you look!' and, 'La! Jemmy, you are lovely, my dear!' and just as Mr. Brown showed the pride that was in his heart, so did they show the trouble and humility that were in theirs.

Mrs. Brown looked as if she had been newly taken from behind a counter where she served her customers in silence and with meekness, and said 'Thank you, ma'am,' as she handed back the change; while poor little Jemima, with her huge bouquet of

white flowers—so suggestive of the bridal bouquet of which indeed it was only the forerunner—was the patient ‘landlady’s daughter’ who attended to the lodgers with diligence, and even would herself have run for the supper beer to please the ‘parlour,’ who joked her so pleasantly. You could make nothing else of them. Trains and fans and rare old lace, diamonds and pearls, my lady’s faultless taste and the deftest hands of maid and milliner to put her ideas into force, all failed to make them the things they simulated—all failed to bring them up to the mark, and transform them from the Browns of Clapton into the de Paumelles of Grantley Bourne. And they felt it, and knew it, and sank under the weight of their grandeur, like llamas crushed by carrying gold.

Lady Machell and her party came early. Had there been no ulterior object to gain, her substantially kind heart—substantially kind when not interfered with by ambition—would have made her careful to be in good time, that she might lend the strength of her presence to the unaccustomed hostess. As it was, she was doubly desirous to appear as the de Paumelle right hand—in part, to show the world in what intimate relations she and her house stood to all this wealth; in part, to support while compelling her son.

The group was a noticeable one; and the social gulf originally existing between the host and the guests was nowhere marked with more distinctness.

Sir Gilbert, my lady, Wilfrid and Arthur, were tall, fine, majestic-looking people; and Hilda, though of a smaller type, had that nameless grace and beauty which are born of generations of good breeding and refinement. The four towered above short, round, rosy-gilled Mr. Brown de Paumelle, his pinched and withered wife, his faded meagre daughter, as if they had been creatures of another race and sphere. Standing at the entrance to the gorgeous rooms, blazing with light and glittering with gold, the guests looked like the hosts, the hosts like some inferior creatures in masquerade who had been admitted by chance and were allowed to remain on sufferance. Sir Gilbert’s quiet face—a sealed book where no one could read the closed pages—and Mr. Brown de Paumelle’s, bursting with pride and alive with transparent exultation; the Baronet self-contained, at perfect ease, slightly shabby, and with not as many pence as this man had hundreds of pounds—and the retired soap-boiler, fussy, restless, newly minted, lustrous, but because of that newness rough at the edges and crude all through—what a contrast they made! It was as great as that made by Lady Machell, looking like some old-

time queen in her heavy, straight-cut, flowing velvet gown and superb black lace mantilla, stately, calm, gracious, and aristocratic to her finger tips, and Mrs. Brown de Paumelle timid, weak-eyed, ill at ease in her finery, and bent in at the chest with nervousness and conscious unfitness; as great as that made by Hilda, young as she was, also calm and gracious and aristocratic like her mother, and poor little Jemmy whose rightful sphere was to be found in that eight-roomed house at Clapton, and her rightful owner honest 'Arry whose highest flight of ambition did not soar beyond five hundred a year and a confidential clerkship in the city. But money is our modern magician; and Circe to succeed in nineteenth century society would have to bribe her lovers by gold not wine.

Even Sir Gilbert, philosopher though he had become, according to the wisdom of an unlucky man who will not lose time or strength in useless regret, as he wandered about the rooms examining the pictures and ornaments on the walls—one arm behind his back according to his favourite attitude—even he felt that all this belonged by the nature of things to him rather than to that other, and wondered greatly how it was that Providence had left old families to decay and set up soap-boilers in the high places in their stead. It was a problem to which just then he could not find an answer; but it held him, and made him feel uncomfortably sceptical of superior ordering.

Lady Machell, with Hilda close to her side, stood by Mrs. de Paumelle as her shield and sponsor; and Arthur talked to his little sister and made her smile—both furtively watching the arrival, to the one of her fairy-tale kind of prince, to the other of the woman who made all the world beautiful for him. Wilfrid, who had spoken to Mr. Brown de Paumelle of his intentions with regard to Jemima, and received his glad permission to 'sound her for himself,' stood as if mounting guard over the poor little girl who felt as if she should sink into the earth when the tall, largely-framed, arbitrary-mannered man bent down and spoke to her as if she were already his engaged wife, claiming her as his private property and his captive, as much as if she had been taken by his bow and spear. It was an hour of trial to all save Mr. Brown de Paumelle and Lady Machell. He was tasting for the first time the full fruits of his success; and she, having resolved, looked only to the good of the event which she had ordained, and put halting and regret as far behind as did placid Sir Gilbert himself.

The great people began to come. Mr. Brown de Paumelle shook hands with each heartily. 'Glad to see you, my Lord;' 'Hope you are well, my Lady;' 'Glad to welcome you to Paumelle

House, sir; the first time and I hope not to be the last;’ ‘I hope you’ll enjoy your evening, ma’am, and the young ladies too; make yourself at home, and the more you’re pleased, the more you’ll please me;’ he said, with honest hospitality running through his vulgar pride, and in his full-flavoured London accent. His wife said nothing. She only bowed to each incomer in the nervous dislocated way of which no teaching by my lady before a pier glass could cure her; and Jemima made a timid little movement which courtesy accepted as the conventional ‘reverence.’ Brown had taken to it like life, as his wife said; and they were content to efface themselves behind his masculine courage and spirit, and to wonder meekly how ever he could do it; and la! but he had a way with him!

Together with the more distant families, those forming the immediate society of the place appeared with a punctuality which destroyed the ordinary calculation of the ‘two-thirds.’ No one was absent. Miss Dinah Forbes, in a plain black silk gown of a severe not to say androgynous cut, without an ornament of any kind, or anywhere, and no covering on her head save her short-cut grizzled hair, came leading in her sister Aurora in white gauze flushed here and there with pink and much bestrewed with flowers—to emblemise her name. They too wandered about the rooms, a little avoided by the neighbourhood because of that unlucky protégé who was sure to murder every living soul among them some of these nights, and who was regarded much as a mad dog would be regarded, wilfully let loose among defenceless folk. Little cared the stalwart Dinah for cold looks or hard words, wherever met with. She rather liked a row, she used to say hardily; and was not a meek Miss to be afraid of a cup full of hot water. Quite unabashed by her temporary unpopularity, she examined the pictures and the blue china, the Japanese vases and the Venetian mirrors, which the upholsterer had supplied according to the direction of the art-decorator, and expressed her approbation or disapprobation in a stentorian voice like a showman; while Miss Aurora echoed her sentiments sweetly.

The Constantines from Sharpeley came, still conscious of those silver Hamburgs, and looking like people who have received a nervous shock and are yet objects for public sympathy. They were three gaunt daughters dressed precisely alike—not a ribbon nor a ringlet differing; one ungainly son; a father who looked more like a Methodist grocer than an English country gentleman; and a mother so prim, so thin, so dry, as to fill one with astonishment how she had ever found herself a wife and mother at all. They avoided the Tower ladies pointedly, but Miss Dinah did not

choose to be avoided; so she went straight up to the group, and 'rallied' them to her heart's content.

The Lucrafts came; always with an eye to business and that not too luxurious larder at home; he blunt and a trifle coarse, she bland, attentive, insinuating, but never forgetting to be her husband's fogleman, and vaunting his merits with rather too evident an air why, for the taste of most people. Then came in Guy Perceval with his chin in the air and his necktie awry; honest if queer; bringing with him an able editor from London, whose ear he specially wished to gain. And then came in Derwent and Muriel Smith; and with them the interest of the evening began for little Hilda as well as for Arthur, and the half-hour of expectant watching ended. What signified the stream of titled nobodies, of well-known county families, of stray lions from London picked up by a few lucky hunters and paraded as treasures of which not half-a-dozen people in the room understood the value? The world and its fulness faded from his sight, or rather all fulness was concentrated in the sweet face that came smiling through the doorway, happy and loving and young—too young to live with fear, too loving to harbour doubt, too happy to remember pain.

As she came into the room—looking like some human flower in her soft flowing creamy dress, with the graceful run of her figure not distorted by the ungainly lines of superfluous millinery, and for all ornament, blush-roses in her bosom and her hair—the band at the end of the drawing-room began the first waltz; almost as if they had waited for her before they opened the ball.

Something that was more than pain passed like a sickness over Lady Machell, as she looked at her son when Muriel came up to their group by the door, and made her greetings to the hosts real and vicarious. She saw in his face what she had never seen there before—a purpose, a resolution, an undisguised openness of passionate love which showed her his heart as a flash of lightning shows the rock across the ship's path. And though Muriel was less demonstrative, and only smiled and blushed, and looked glad and shy and sweet as any other pretty girl might have done, yet in hers too Lady Machell read that subtle something which reveals itself as love, and knew that she had to combat here with truth as well as there with passion.

'Just in time,' said Arthur offering his arm; and Muriel took it, looking at Derwent pleadingly and at Lady Machell in a pretty kind of deprecation of wrath, but with a whole world of shy delight in her eyes as she glanced up at Arthur, and walked before them all leaning on his arm through the rooms. They followed

immediately after Wilfrid and Jemima; he crushing in his heart the despair and love and wrath which filled it, as a man might crush the serpent that was round his throat strangling him, but giving no sign that anything was amiss, and bearing himself in his hour of trial with a stolid constancy that was almost inhuman.

‘And the same honour to me?’ said Derwent to Hilda.

Hilda looked at her mother dutifully, and hesitated. Lady Machell looked at Derwent and hesitated too. She then glanced round the room. No one was there whose interest she especially wished to secure for her daughter; and no one had as yet asked her to dance.

‘Bring her back to me as soon as the waltz is over,’ she said severely; and Derwent, radiant, answered ‘Yes,’ and left her with his prize, feeling much as a young king, lord of life and the hour, might feel when he had subdued his enemy and marked a victory on his banners. Hilda was on his arm—his for the moment—his by all the laws of youth and love: what more did he want? Scarcely yet the bolder joy of acknowledgment. We do not ask green buds to give us fruit, nor does a boy’s romance demand a man’s assurance.

Guy Perceval had not forgotten his engagement with Muriel. On the contrary, it had been a very vivid remembrance ever since it had been made. But at this moment he was in the inner drawing-room, talking with his able editor and The Earl on the possibility of breeding silkworms in Cornwall. Besides, he had not seen Muriel enter, and he hoped that she had not yet come.

Guy Perceval was young in years; at the age indeed when to dance with a pretty girl, secretly designed to be one day chosen as the wife of his bosom, counts as the most important affair in a man’s life; but he was old in mind, and even such a significant fact as this initial dance with Muriel came far behind a ride on a new-found hobby. A conversation with an earl and an editor on the possibilities of breeding silkworms in England was something deserving a serious man’s best attention; to waltz with Muriel Smith was only a sign; and he could transact the substance just as well some other way. Nevertheless, he broke off his conversation to keep his engagement, and by the time the waltz was half over came back into the throng, to claim the hand which he expected to find free—and waiting for him.

He looked round the first reception-room, but Muriel was not there; only Lady Machell standing by the side of her hostess, and introducing to her those of the guests whom she knew and Mrs. Brown de Paumelle did not. Sir Gilbert had wandered away into the card-room, where he was losing his five-shilling points with

unruffled equanimity. He was a man who never knew how to manage his trumps and whose long suit generally melted away in discards.

‘Where are they?’ asked Guy in his high-pitched voice.

‘Who?—my boys and Hilda?’ answered Lady Machell smiling.

‘And Miss Smith,’ he replied.

‘Miss Smith? I believe she is dancing with my son Arthur,’ said Lady Machell quietly.

‘She was engaged to me,’ cried Guy. ‘I engaged her for the first waltz a week or more ago; and this is a waltz, is it not?’

‘As you did not appear, I suppose that my boy, who is good-natured, took compassion on her,’ said Lady Machell. ‘It was the kind of thing he would do. You know how kind-hearted he is.’

‘She should have waited for me,’ said Guy with a certain uneasy displeasure.

He held to the supremacy of men and the devout attendance of women on their will, as an article of faith that was of vital importance in the progress of humanity; and anything that savoured of feminine independence, not to speak of the new school of advanced females—the Shrieking Sisterhood as some one called them—was specially abhorrent to him.

‘Yes,’ said Lady Machell, ‘so she would had she been thorough. These half ladies never do the right thing.’

She said this in a lowered voice. It was treading on delicate ground to speak of half ladies in the hearing of Mrs. de Paumelle, late, old Brown’s good lady living out Clapton way.

‘I thought she would have been better bred than this,’ said Mr. Perceval crossly. ‘I am disappointed in her.’

‘Are you? I am not. I never expect more than I find anywhere—certainly not in that quarter,’ said Lady Machell, with the finest little flicker of disdain in her face and voice. ‘Have you seen my daughter?’ she then asked, as if glancing off from a disagreeable and unimportant topic to one both important and pleasant. ‘Her first ball! An event in her young life never to be forgotten, and one with which a mother can so well sympathise.’

‘No,’ said Guy looking round; ‘where is she?’

‘In the ball-room, dancing with young Smith,’ said Lady Machell. ‘Not a desirable partner you will say, in some respects, but undeniably one of the best waltzers in the room; and I was not sorry that the dear child should be well piloted in her first essay, even if I do not quite approve of the pilot.’

‘Miss Machell is too well bred to do anything doubtful,’ said Guy Perceval a little at random, but meaning to aim a shaft at Muriel beneath his garland for Hilda.

Lady Machell smiled; a mother's smile of fond approval, mixed with a certain personal pride for the share that she herself had had in her child's perfections.

'I hope so,' she said; 'she has been brought up too carefully for doubt to cling to her in any way. She is "thorough," I am thankful to say!'

'Nothing is of more importance than a wise up-bringing,' said Guy Perceval, vaulting into the saddle; 'save, in the first instance, a stainless parentage. But just as a wise up-bringing can modify the evils of a disastrous pedigree, so can a bad education vitiate the best blood in the world, destroy the finest natural inheritance.'

'Just so,' said Lady Machell. 'And when you come to both combined—on either side, the bad and the good——'

The rest was expressed in uplifted eyebrows for the one part, and a smile for the other.

'Yes,' said Guy Perceval; 'exactly.'

At this moment the music ceased, and those of the waltzers whose chaperons were in the reception rooms, came back for the conventional care and countenance. Among them Derwent Smith brought Hilda Machell to restore her honestly to her mother the instant the waltz was over, according to the agreement between them.

'I hoped to have had the pleasure of this waltz with your sister,' said Guy Perceval to Derwent, after he had looked round in impossible places for Muriel.

Derwent flung up his head, and tossed back his hair.

'She has been dancing with Mr. Machell,' he said a little stiffly.

'She was engaged to me,' returned Guy.

'So she told me,' said Derwent; 'and she told me too of her other engagements to you, but I have put a stop to them.'

Guy Perceval looked at him in frank amazement. It was not anger nor disappointment; not any feeling so much as simple astonishment at the presumption of a youth like Derwent Smith thus daring to cross his path and controvert his will.

'Do I hear you rightly?' he asked. 'You have put a stop to your sister's engagements with me?'

'Yes,' said Derwent. 'You asked too much from her. It would cause her to be talked about; and I cannot have my sister talked about.'

'I think that I am likely to be as careful of your sister as you yourself,' said Guy rather hotly.

'Excuse me, but that is not very likely,' returned Derwent with supreme disdain. 'An ordinary acquaintance cannot be com-

pared with a brother; and I cannot admit such a line of argument for a moment.'

'*You* admit?' said Guy Perceval scornfully, italicising the pronoun.

'Yes; I. And as I am responsible to myself for my sister, I am the best judge of what she ought to do.'

Derwent said this quietly enough, but with as much pride as if he were a king and the owner of the Manor a churl.

'She is of an age to judge for herself,' said Guy Perceval in his high voice, which trembled with anger.

'She is under age and in my care,' returned Derwent; 'and I distinctly forbid this frequent dancing with you, Mr. Perceval. It is my duty to protect my sister—and a duty there is not the slightest chance that I shall neglect!'

He looked so warlike and handsome as he spoke, so like a young Saint George prepared to fight any number of dragons, that even Lady Machell found herself wishing that he had been rich and possible; while Hilda raised her pretty eyes to his face—when her mother could not see her—and thought him the supreme perfection of humanity in a dress coat and white kid gloves to be found on the face of the earth. She was not of the kind to abase herself before strength like poor Jemima, nor to reverence and love like Muriel: but she was pleased that her fairy-tale young prince should look beautiful and speak royally; and just now Derwent was looking very beautiful and speaking very royally indeed.

'Where is my son, Mr. Smith?' asked Lady Machell, partly to make a diversion, partly because she wanted to see her son set free from Muriel.

It was annoying that Mr. Perceval should have shown this silly preference for her so openly; but that might be got over. There was evidently no desire on the part of the family at Owlett to make their game with the Manor for the stakes; Arthur's infatuation was more serious, and might have worse consequences. But really between her son, and the man whom she wished to make her son-in-law, the situation was embarrassing; and even her tact a little failed to show her the best passage through the straits.

'Arthur?' repeated Derwent. 'He is with my sister.'

He meant nothing by his words. He had no more wish that Muriel should be taken by Arthur Machell than by Guy Perceval, and no more idea that any sentiment was between them, than between her and Dr. Christopher Lucraft, say. But in the state of feeling in which both Lady Machell and Mr. Perceval were, it *seemed* as if he spoke with intentional familiarity—intentional and impertinent too.

'Then will you have the kindness to tell "Arthur" that I want to speak to him?' said Lady Machell with well-bred disdain.

'And I too!' cried Guy Perceval, meaning war. 'If he knew of Miss Smith's prior engagement to me, he must answer for his conduct.'

'Do you think it is a thing worth making yourself or your true friends uncomfortable about?' asked Lady Machell in a low voice. 'What did we agree just now, dear Mr. Perceval? And you may be sure that Arthur meant no slight to you.'

'You have nothing to say to any one but me,' said Derwent proudly. 'I alone am responsible for my sister's actions.'

'I do not argue with boys,' said Guy contemptuously.

Lady Machell laid her hand on his arm.

'My friend!' she breathed in a fine maternal manner.

'Let the discussion drop!' then said Guy suddenly. 'It is not worth another thought, nor all the words that have been wasted on it. Miss Smith is free from any future attentions from me. I have no desire to force them or myself,' haughtily, 'on an unwelcome recipient.'

'I expected as much,' said Derwent with aggravating equanimity. 'So now we understand each other.'

'Yes, now we understand each other,' repeated Guy Perceval; 'and I understand only what I might have expected, given the conditions.'

'Just so,' said Derwent, without an idea as to what the conditions were to which Guy Perceval alluded—accepting the phrase as meaning for his own part, that he would not like his sister to be connected with him anyhow, Muriel being infinitely too good for him, the Manor and that fifteen thousand a year notwithstanding.

Much comforted by this view of things, and elated by feeling that he had come out victor in the fray—and that too before Hilda—with a graceful but undeniably affected bow to Lady Machell, including Hilda at whom he looked with something that was not affectation in his handsome, pale young face, Derwent sauntered slowly up the room, leaving Guy Perceval offended for life, and sure to be the enemy of the Owlett family from now to the day of his death, should opportunities for showing enmity arise. He was a good fellow enough in some things, but magnanimity was not his forte.

The band sounded the first notes of a mazurka, and Derwent who was a welcome partner everywhere, and as fond of dancing as a well-constituted youth of his age should be, took on his arm a pretty little girl from London who was staying with some people

in the neighbourhood, and for the moment forgot his sister and Guy Perceval, Arthur Machell and my lady—but never quite forgot Hilda—in the pleasure of the rapid movement, and the lightness and precision with which his partner ‘did her steps.’ If only this pretty little girl had been Hilda! he thought, with a sudden sigh that made his partner stare, and wonder if it meant that he found her too pleasant for his peace? She had graduated in Bayswater, where she knew Miss Lucy.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE DIE CAST.

WILFRID had not been sorry to come to an end of the series of odd movements which constituted Jemima’s idea of waltzing; and which, had Paumelle House been the Trouville salon, say, would have caused ‘inextinguishable laughter’ among the bystanders. As it was, the guests contented themselves with that kind of thing which goes by the name of sniggering among vulgar people, and is set down as an ‘aside’ in stage directions.

He had done his duty; shown himself publicly as the principal man of the evening, so far as the Brown de Paumelles were concerned; the one who had the right to appropriate the heiress, and to whom the significant wink of old Brown, as he carried her off to ‘open the ball,’ was a thing to accept as part of the programme, not to resent as an impertinent inference and a vulgar familiarity; and now he might have a little respite from this public participation in his affairs, which perhaps was the most difficult to bear of all the trials to his pride. The most important moment had to come; but that at least might be transacted alone.

This initial dance over, he took Jemima into the conservatory, prepared to complete the sacrifice which had been begun. For it was a sacrifice on both sides; one where it would be hard to say which of the two victims was the more to be pitied. Perhaps it was Jemima. If she had not the personal repugnance to overcome which he had, and none of his regrets for a love that could not be fulfilled and of which even the consciousness must be destroyed, yet she would find their married life the harder to bear; and she was the weaker. If he suffered the more actively, he had the larger amount of strength wherewith to bear his sufferings; and his gain would be the greater all through in their bargain of flesh and blood for money and position. Yes, it was the frail little woman who was the more to be pitied; but a marriage in which *there are degrees of pitifulness, gradations of suffering, and where*

both are victims alike, is not one on which the gods can be said to smile, or where the congratulations of men ring true.

All this was beside the question now. The hour had come; the thing had to be done; and the sooner it was got over the better.

The one trembling, submissive, and abjectly miserable, the other hardened to his task and stoically resolute to fulfil his fate, Jemima and Wilfrid entered the conservatory—she in pain for what was coming, he knowing that this was only the beginning of a pain which would endure for both to the end of time. There was a garden seat in the conservatory, set in the darker part where the light of the central rose-coloured lamp did not penetrate, and under the shade of the lemon and orange trees.

‘Let us sit there,’ said Wilfrid; ‘we shall be alone there.’

Jemima made no reply. She was trembling too much to speak, and she felt as if she could scarcely breathe. She trailed herself along rather than walked, for her knees bent under her and her feet were like lead; but his strong arm upheld her, and almost lifting her from the ground, he carried her to the chair, where she sank down, a nerveless, ungraceful mass of distress which humiliated him to witness.

‘It is brutal,’ he thought; ‘she does not love me, and I cannot pretend to love her. She will accept me because she dare not refuse; but it is the submission of fear and of weakness.’

They were silent. Her evident terror touched him, and his main thought was how he could best soothe her. He took her hand in his and held it, if not tenderly yet kindly clasped. After all she was a woman, and he was a man to whom all women were in a sense sacred; some for their beauty and others for their weakness, some for their charm and others for their sorrow.

‘You are trembling,’ he then said after a few moments, lowering his voice and speaking with unaffected softness. ‘Are you afraid of me?’

‘I am cold,’ said Jemima evasively.

‘Not afraid of me?’

She hung her head.

‘Do you think you will always be afraid of me?’ he asked.

‘If we were together for a long time?—for all our lives?’

Still she said nothing. All her conscious thought went into the one unspoken cry:

‘Oh, if ma was here now! Oh, how I want my ma!’

‘I am going to ask you to live with me always,’ Wilfrid went on to say; ‘to ask you too, not to be afraid of me any longer, but

to love me instead; and to be my good little wife, whom I shall care for and try to make happy.'

He could not say 'whom I shall love.' Even at this moment he had his reservations, his points of truth and honour which he must keep sacred.

Still she said nothing. He only felt her poor little flaccid hand lie yet more limp and helpless in his, and heard a shuddering kind of sigh, like a person in a half swoon, which almost determined him to give up the whole thing from simple pity for her. But he thought of his mother, of Machells, of his resolution, his need; and he comforted himself with the thought—wilfully blinding himself to the truth—that he would win her to confidence in time, and make her happy at the end; that the marriage was a great social honour for her if a pecuniary advantage to him; and that, for the future gain all round, the present pain might well be undergone.

'Will you not speak to me?' he said softly and kindly. 'Am I really so very formidable to you that you cannot accept me as your husband? Do you dislike me so much as that?'

'I do not dislike you, Captain Machell,' said poor Jemima faintly.

'No? What is it then, that will not let you speak to me?—fear?'

'Just it,' she answered.

'But fear of what?' he asked, feeling that he had gained something by making her talk. 'What do you think I shall do to you?—scold you?—ill-treat you?—what?'

'Nothing of all that,' she said; 'but——'

'But what?'

'You are such a swell, and so big!' said Jemima at last, with the courage of despair.

'Don't you like tall men?' he asked lightly.

'To look at, yes,' she answered; 'but ma and me, we are not swells, if pa is; and I'm so little!'

'Is that all?' he laughed. 'If you have no other fault to find with me, I think we shall soon get over this difficulty, even though I cannot reduce my inches to the standard of what?—five feet nothing?'

'Five feet and a quarter,' said Jemima.

'All tall men like little women,' said Wilfrid with generous catholicity of assertion. 'And as for being a swell, as you call it, what are you? Look at yourself to-night,' lightly touching the *costly string* of pearls about the meagre little throat which he *could have spanned* between his finger and thumb, with space to

spare. 'Look at the house—at this ball—the whole thing. Why, you are ten times more a swell than I am!'

'But ma and me, we don't like it,' was her piteous reply. 'Pa does, and you were born to it; but we would rather be quiet, and to our two selves only.'

'You shall live as quietly as you like when you are my wife,' answered Wilfrid. 'I hope that I am too much of a man to force my wife's wishes in anything. And if you like to be quiet and simple and retired, you shall be. That is no objection. Have you none other?'

Again she was silent.

'Speak to me,' he said, in a soft voice but an imperious spirit. 'Do you not know that this is the most important moment of my life—of both our lives?' he added by an afterthought; 'and that we cannot be too candid one with another?'

'I have no objections to you,' then said Jemima timidly.

'And you do not dislike the idea of being my wife? You will love me and be happy with me?'

'That is another pair of shoes,' she answered simply.

Wilfrid turned away his head and ground his teeth.

'Shoes that do not fit?' he asked after a time, and with a forced laugh.

She did not take his sorry joke. Fun was not a pronounced constituent in Jemima Brown de Paumelle's nature.

'At all events, let us come to a distinct understanding,' said Wilfrid, a shade of impatience mingling with the abnormal softness and kindness of his manner. 'It must be settled now at once and for ever. Will you accept me as your husband or not? You know me' (which she did not) 'and I know you. Do you think you can be happy with me, and that you will not regret your marriage? In a word—will you marry me?'

She glanced up into his face, her own pale with fear. The frail fabric of her confidence which had been so slowly growing in her mind, was scattered to the winds at the harsher sound of his voice, the sterner look in his eyes; and she was once more the trembling little victim bound over by fate to become his bride.

'If you like me to,' said the heiress of millions in a scarcely audible voice, and after a long pause.

'And you will not regret it?'

'I will try not,' she said, her tears beginning to fall.

Her fear, humility, and weakness generally, again touched the heart and moved the pity of the strong man. He once more took her hand in his, as kindly as before, and drew her a little nearer to him.

‘And I will try that you shall not,’ he said gently. ‘Do you think I shall succeed—dear?’

‘Oh!’ said Jemima, penetrated, ‘I’ll not be afraid of you if you always speak like that.’

‘You are a good little thing,’ said Wilfrid with a hearty sigh. ‘I should be a brute not to do my best by you. So now we are engaged to each other, and in a few months’ time are to be man and wife.’

He drew her still nearer, and lightly kissed her forehead.

‘I’m sure I never thought it would come to this,’ said Jemima with simplicity.

That light touch on her forehead seemed to have tranquillised rather than disturbed her. Yet it was the first embrace that she had ever received from any man, save her father; and she had always declared to her mother that she should die, she was sure she should, if ever a man kissed her. Her mother used to tell her quietly that she did not think she would, but that she hoped she would not be put to the proof; and now when she was put to the proof the mother turned out the better prophet of the two.

‘Did you not? I did,’ he answered. ‘I knew it all along.’

‘But I can’t understand whatever in the world you can see in a plain little body like me to care for,’ she continued.

‘Heart goes before looks,’ said Wilfrid with more truth than tact; ‘and what I like in you is your nature, not your face.’

‘There’s not much to like in either,’ said Jemima with a faint sigh of deprecation.

‘I think differently; and I understand you,’ he said.

She shook her head.

‘Ma understands me; no one else does,’ she answered sadly.

‘Then, if I do not now, I shall in time,’ was his reply.

‘And perhaps when you come to know more of me you won’t care for me so much,’ she said, her tears beginning again to fall; for that something which was not love so much as the woman’s natural pleasure in being won, and self-glorification in the fact that she has been sought, had been awakened by Wilfrid’s love-making, tepid as it was, and the prospect of losing the ‘joy which made her fear’ overcame her.

Besides, the interview tried her on every count; and she dreaded its continuance and ending alike. To go back to the room Captain Machell’s engaged wife, believing that she should carry that fact plainly printed on her face, was a terror to think of. All the same, to sit here with him almost in the dark, her hand in his, his voice so low, his manner so subdued, her belief in his overpowering love for her so sincere, her fear of him in spite of her temporary burst

of confidence so genuine—she who had never heard a word of love from any man, and whose sole experience that way had been confined to a giggling eye-flirtation with a young lawyer's clerk who had lived near them at Clapton, to be now the engaged wife of a future Baronet, standing six feet two in his stocking-feet—it was dreadful! Coming on the turmoil of the ball, and the dread nourished for days of what it would bring forth, it was more than she could bear. Her one sole desire was to be able to creep to bed, with her mother to bring her a cup of tea and sit with her for half an hour till she had cried herself to sleep. She was breaking down rapidly under the prolonged excitement of the interview; so she cried at the hypothetical misery of Captain Machell ceasing to care for her as an excuse for her general hysterical depression.

‘You must not cry, and you must not doubt me,’ said Wilfrid gently. ‘Things will never come right if you doubt me, and they will not go wrong if you trust me.’

Still her tears continued; not quite silently. She was one of those peaked-faced mousy little women who snore when they are asleep, and use their handkerchiefs noisily when they are awake.

‘What can I do for you?’ cried Wilfrid a little despairingly. ‘Tell me what is the matter with you; I cannot comfort you if I do not know what is wrong.’

‘I want to go to ma,’ then said Jemima in a broken voice. ‘I do feel so lost without ma.’

‘Poor little soul!’ he half sighed compassionately. ‘Well, compose yourself—dear. Dry your eyes and wait here a moment quietly, till you are quite yourself again, and then I will take you back to your mother. Will it comfort you to rest on my arm?’

He put his arm round her attenuated little figure, and held her to him; and Jemima, with a child-like gesture, yielding to the pressure, turned her face inward to his shoulder and laid her hand on his breast. It was an action that claimed his protection and trusted in it—that filled him with a pity, a tenderness of compassion for her, as sorrowful as if he had been looking at the face of one dead. But it ratified and confirmed all; and as Jemima felt herself homed in that strong grasp, and knew now that she had given herself irrevocably, as before when he kissed her a certain peace and calmness came to her, and she grew quiet and almost happy in her sense of his strength and her faith in his protection.

Wilfrid kept an unbroken silence. His left arm was round her, his right hand covered and held hers which she had laid against his breast. He felt her heart flutter, and heard her breath come in gusts and broken sighs that gradually fell into peace and regularity as they sat there so still and silent; but his own pulses

beat as slowly, and his breath came as calmly, as if he had been holding in his arms a sleeping child and not the overwrought woman who had just promised to be his wife, and in that promise had pronounced the restoration of his family and fortune, and the ruin of his happiness and her own.

And soon his mind wandered away to a thousand distant and irrelevant things, till he found himself thinking of Muriel, and how beautiful she looked to-night, and what life would have been to him with her to share it, before he fully realised the dishonesty of his thoughts. Then he roused himself from his reverie as a man rouses himself from the temptation to commit a dishonesty, and with a checked sigh he bent his head nearer to his future wife, and said quietly :

‘ Well, are you recovered now ? ’

‘ Yes,’ she answered, taking a deep breath and lifting herself into an upright position. ‘ I feel more myself now, thank you.’

‘ Let us go into the room then,’ said Wilfrid, who had withdrawn his arm and let her hand fall.

‘ Ma will be sure to see it,’ stammered Jemima.

‘ She will not be sorry to see it,’ he answered. ‘ Come.’

He rose, smiling as pleasantly as he could, but in point of fact smiling as sadly as tears.

Jemima glanced up into his face. She knew of love scenes only what she had read in novels ; but these told her that a great deal of kissing generally went on at such moments, and she quaked at what might be coming. She had no cause. Wilfrid made no sign. He simply offered her his hand, then drew hers within his arm ; and so, talking about the flowers as they passed the stands, they slowly went through the central avenue of the conservatory on their way to the reception room—with Mr. and Mrs. Brown de Paumelle and my lady to understand what had passed.

At the door, coming in as they were going out, he met his brother Arthur and Muriel Smith.

The world is full of sharp contrasts. They make more than half the sorrow of life, but they give it more than half its colour, and the dead level of absolute uniformity would be but a dull kind of existence to everyone. Still, they are sometimes painful enough to the poor souls in torment, if those in bliss do not give themselves much trouble to compassionate their less fortunate brethren. It was such a contrast now when the two brothers met face to face, each with the woman of his choice on his arm—the one the engaged wife ; the other the unpromised lover—the one so confessedly unloved, and, though taken, unvalued ; the other loved as men of wholesome hearts and strong affections do love the one dear woman *who is theirs* by the fitness of nature as well as by the kindly

chance of circumstances—but the one bringing gold from basement to garret; and the other bringing only her own sweet self for gain, and—what else for loss?

Strong, compressed, but with deep lines of pain in his rough-hewn face—Jemima shrinking, ungraceful, white where she should be red and red where she should be white—Wilfrid looked at the two happy lovers standing framed in the doorway with a sudden burst of jealous anger that startled even himself by its hidden violence. The suppression to which he had been subjected for the last quarter of an hour made the reaction all the stronger; and ‘love’s shadow, hate,’ fell on the woman whom he secretly loved and had been forced to renounce, with even greater violence than on that day of rehearsal when he had met her with his brother in the road and guessed the secret which he saw so plainly now.

For who could fail to see it, legibly written as it was in the look and bearing of each? Arthur, radiant, resolute, with nothing of the doubt or fear of love in the handsome face which gazed into Muriel’s with a passionate devotion which he did not care to conceal—his eyes, grave yet tender, bright with the joy soft with the sweetness of a man’s hope risen into confidence so soon to be made assurance; and Muriel, half unconscious yet of her love as love; knowing only that she was happy, divinely happy, happy as the angels in heaven are happy, and feeling as if earth and this glaring glittering Paumelle House to-night were not much unlike heaven—but showing more than she knew by the almost unearthly sweetness of her face, by the tender darkness of her downcast eyes, by the faint, shy, loving smile that hovered round her mouth half revealing, half concealing, the secret of her soul—by her bashful manner at this moment to Arthur, bashful yet fond, not wishing to leave him, yet ashamed to be alone with him in the dim twilight of the conservatory—yes, it was a secret easy to read; and the intention on Arthur’s side was as patent to Wilfrid as its object.

But what could he say? Arthur was his younger brother truly, but he was a man, and one not very patient of interference. And how could he be even sarcastic to him for taking Muriel where he had just taken Jemima? The ballroom was oppressive and the conservatory cool and refreshing; the answer was too easy, if even he should allow himself to fling at his brother that much desired sneer hovering on his lips. And as just then other couples came trooping through the doorway, and the solitude which he had found so useful was invaded, his sarcasm would have fallen still flatter; and—he had no need to be afraid. He hoped that there would be no confession this evening; unless indeed it had already taken place; and if he could tide his brother over the immediate

danger of the next few weeks, Wilfrid trusted to be able to do something for him—discounting some of the Brown de Paumelle millions, which should include professional advancement and personal banishment from England altogether. But for all this he could not resist saying something disagreeable. He could not bear to know that Arthur was profiting by his sacrifice, and not make them suffer somewhat; so he turned to Muriel and said in his coldest and most unpleasant manner:

‘You are fond of the dark, I see, Miss Smith. I should have thought the light more congenial to you. Is this good for you?’

‘I do not call this dark,’ Muriel answered coldly. ‘It is cool after the heat of the ballroom.’

‘So I imagine you two have found it,’ said Arthur with a laugh.

‘La!’ thought Jemima; ‘how can Captain Machell go on so at them when he brought me here his own self!’

‘What lovely flowers you have here, Miss de Paumelle,’ said Muriel, to make a diversion; ‘and how perfect that golden fern is!’

‘Yes; pa spends a deal of money on all these things,’ said Jemima with a little sigh. ‘I can’t remember the name of half of them, but they’re pretty to look at, and some are beautiful to smell.’

‘It is difficult to learn all those long Latin names,’ said Muriel kindly; ‘and greenhouse flowers seldom have any other. What a beautiful bouquet you had when we came in!’ glancing at her hand and not seeing it now.

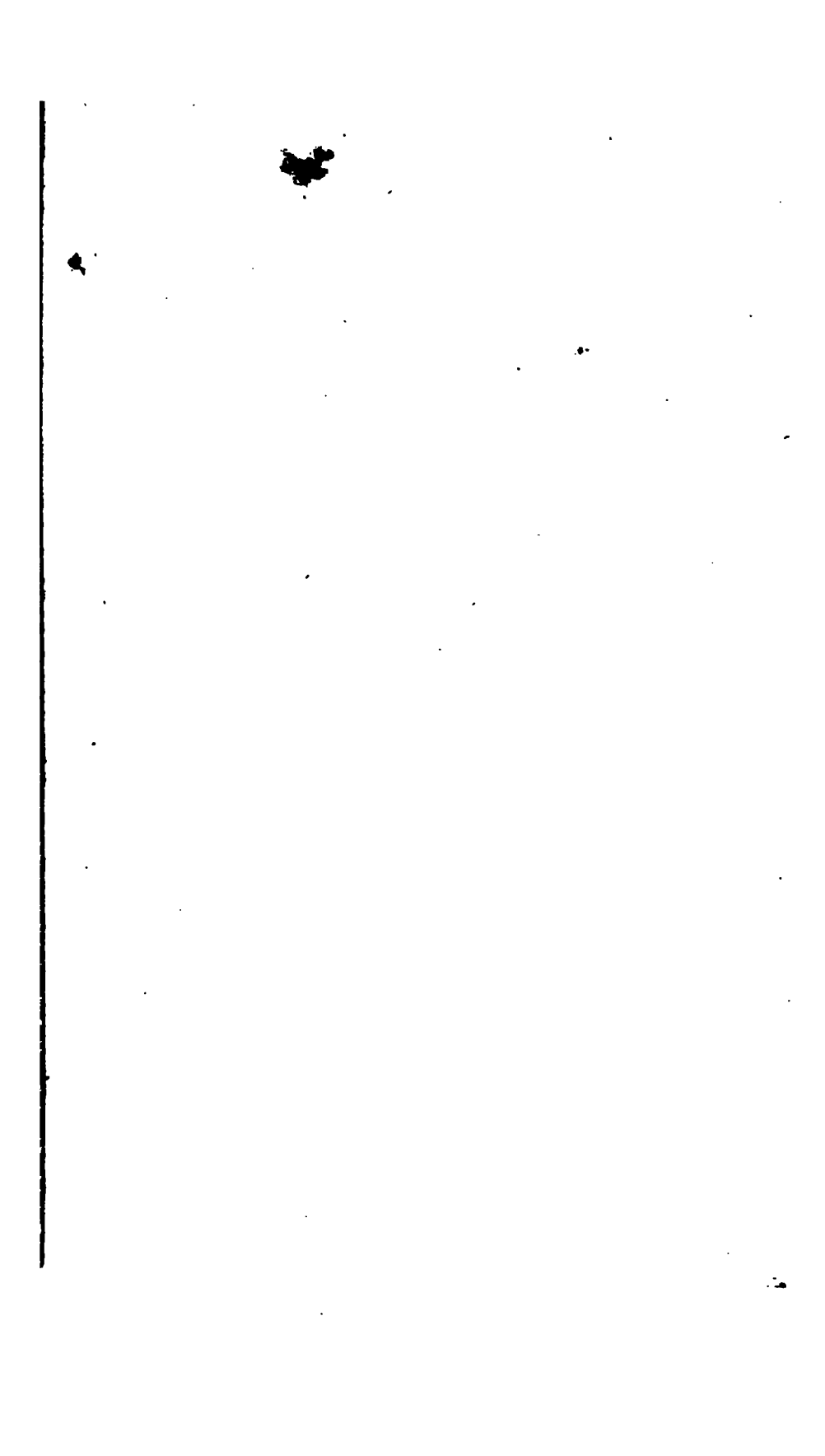
‘Yes, it was handsome,’ said Jemima. ‘But it was bothering to hold when I was dancing, so ma is keeping it for me against I go back.’

‘I saw it—it was quite bridal,’ said Arthur lightly.

He was one of those men who never see what it is desired they should not; who never ferret out secrets and are not often confided in, not because they are without sympathy or cannot keep confidence, but because there is something in them naturally antagonistic to secrecy and not friendly to concealment. And now, having been kept in the dark concerning the proposed arrangements between the two families, and as Wilfrid, not being a very expansive lover, had not betrayed by his manner what was going on, he had not had the faintest idea of how things stood. Hence he stumbled on the trail without knowing, and rather wondered at the effect produced by what to him was a totally insignificant speech. For at the word ‘bridal’ Jemima blushed and hung her head, and by a natural instinct clung to Wilfrid’s arm and seemed to ask him to speak for her. Drooping, conscious, oppressed, she



'WHAT LOVELY FLOWERS YOU HAVE HERE!'



suddenly collapsed, and both Muriel and Arthur felt embarrassed by her evident distress, and both looked to Wilfrid as if for explanation.

It was one of those moments wherein all the pain of life seems to be concentrated, when the soul goes down into the torture chamber and the heart is given up to agony. But Wilfrid was brave and could bear pain nobly.

‘It was a true emblem,’ he said in a steady voice and with a stately manner, looking full into his brother’s face and then into Muriel’s. ‘Miss de Paumelle has done me the honour to promise to be my wife. Let me present to you—to Jemima—‘your future brother-in-law’—to Muriel—‘and to you, Miss Smith, the future Mrs. Machell.’

‘I am so glad!’ said Muriel in her soft voice and with her sweet manner of frank sympathy, shaking hands with Jemima. Arthur, after one rapid look of astonishment, shook hands too, and said heartily :

‘I congratulate you both. I know what a good fellow you have chosen, Miss de Paumelle, and I feel sure that he has been as fortunate. But it has taken me by surprise,’ he added in an undertone to Wilfrid ; ‘why did you not tell me?’

‘I did not consider myself bound to ask your consent or to give you my confidence,’ said Wilfrid with a haughty air and savage glance at his handsome unvictimized brother, standing there with the woman of his love on his arm ; that woman for whose love, had it been possible, he would have given his own life. Then speaking rapidly he added in Latin : ‘Do not play the fool, O my brother. Remember, marriage is more than beauty or a boy’s fancy.’

‘So you evidently think,’ thought Arthur ; but he did not say out his thought ; he contented himself with replying, ‘Thanks,’ in an off-hand manner, and leaving the inference doubtful.

After this that painful silence of constraint, which expresses so much more than words, fell on the little group. Jemima crept nearer to Wilfrid, and Wilfrid looked down on her with exaggerated courtesy—a courtesy which he did his best to force into the likeness of tenderness. Muriel played with the fronds of a golden fern, her hand loosed from Arthur’s arm ; and Arthur pulled at his moustache according to the way of men when they are at a loss for words.

Then Wilfrid, turning to Jemima with that air of supreme regard for one person which is meant to pique another, said in a protecting yet deferential kind of way :

‘Shall we go into the drawing-room ? Would you wish it ?’

And on Jemima murmuring ‘Yes,’ he gave a grim smile to

Muriel, and a warning look to Arthur, and with the heiress still clinging to his arm passed away from the two lovers, the current of whose thoughts he had turned, the confession of whose love he had arrested, and whose moment of opportunity he had destroyed.

For following immediately on his departure was Derwent's advent. He had been looking for his sister since the last mazurka, to tell her of the result of his interview with Guy Perceval, and that she was now free from his importunity for ever. And having found her he remained with her; till Arthur, growing impatient, thought that he might as well go back into the ballroom and get some of his social duties off his hands, as remain there to be tantalised and baffled. Securing Muriel for the dance next to this he left her with Derwent while he went off to utilise the spoilt time; and in all innocence cut in, before a lumbering squire had got half way across the room, and took possession of the youngest Miss Constantine, who did not care the traditional two straws for him, but who had eyes for the lumbering young squire, and aspirations.

CHAPTER XV.

AMONG THE FLOWERS.

MARTIAL and lordly, bearing himself as if the woman on his arm had been the woman of his loving choice and not of his enforced needs, Wilfrid walked through the crowded glittering rooms with his engaged wife clinging to him, till he came to the family group still standing together; his mother with her queenly presence and noble beauty, and his future father-in-law whom no art of man could ever make other than the original soap-boiler of Fore Street; his sister, who might have been a young princess for birth and breeding, and Mrs. de Paumelle who was to be his second mother, like nothing so much as the depressed and humble widow selling Berlin wools and hair-pins to the ladies of the village where her husband had been the Independent minister, and universally respected, if not followed.

The first two were talking together; what a contrast, and what a desecration! thought Jemima's affianced husband. Mrs. de Paumelle was looking wistfully up the room, watching for her daughter; and Hilda was listening to some advice from Guy Perceval on the importance of cold bathing and light clothing, and the necessity of hanging all her skirts by straps from her shoulders, instead of by bands round her waist.

Lady Machell, on the principle of catching a heart at the rebound when sprung by vanity as well as love, had kept Guy near her, and had soothed him into even a happier frame of mind than

he would have known with Muriel. For his perception of her fitness to be his wife was perhaps greater than his desire to be her husband; and certainly the annoyance that he had had about those dances had wounded his self-love more than his affections.

At a glance the three principals knew what had happened. Lady Machell read her son's face, and the Brown de Paumelles their daughter's. The Rubicon had been passed at last, the die cast, the game played out, and the stakes won. Money and the restoration of the old family to its fitting place in the county to the one; to the other admission into the sacred circle of the local magnates as one of themselves, an integral member, no longer a mere outsider barely tolerated for his wealth, and his daughter the mother of the future owners of Machells.

It was a proud and happy moment to at least two in the group; but to Mrs. Brown de Paumelle, with tears in her poor weak eyes as she whispered, 'God bless you, my dear;' to Jemima, with tears in her eyes too, as she clung to her mother and felt all her old repugnance to her present rampant riches and future titular splendour, all her old dread of her lordly lover recur, backed by the new shame of remembering that she had laid on his breast and been kissed by him—if only on the forehead, yet kissed; and to Wilfrid himself, knowing his own heart as he did, there was not much feeling of pride nor cause for congratulation.

What was wanting on the one side however, was made up by excess on the other, and in this way the balance equalised itself. Lady Machell's handsome face became superb with the light of the proud content that beamed over it. She made no public demonstration, but her fine eyes flashed through a softening haze as she looked at her son, and her magnificent person was like that of a queen when she wishes to show a grace graciously, as she bent down to speak to Jemima, and whispered softly:

'My second little daughter! So you have really consented to make one of us!'

'Thank you, Lady Machell,' said Jemima, full of tears and trepidation, but blushing a little pleasantly too. 'It seems the Captain would have me.'

'Which shows his good taste, my dear,' said Lady Machell heroically.

'So I think,' echoed Mrs. Brown de Paumelle, with more self-assertion than she would have dared to show on any other subject, as she turned a fond look on her daughter whose hand she took secretly, and pressed with a nervous little grasp that nearly did for poor little Jemmy, as she expressed herself afterwards.

Wilfrid, knowing what was expected of him, and prepared to

undergo even the ridicule of the affair, if that too was in the bond, as he had already endured its pain, looking at his future father-in-law, said, in his slow heavy way :

‘Mr. de Paumelle, you remember our conversation yesterday? I am happy to tell you that your daughter has said Yes, and that our families are to be united.’

‘And I congratulate you on having the best little wife in England, let who will bring a better,’ said Mr. Brown with agitation. ‘And she’ll have a fine man for her husband, and one as’ll do honour to his name and education. And I’ll come down as I said I would, Captain. I’m a man of my word, I am, and no one could ever say of old Brown of Fore Street that he sold worse than he sampled, and I’ll not begin the crooked game now, you may take your blessed oath of that!’

On which he shook hands with Wilfrid, chuckling noisily; hugged his pale little daughter, and slapped his wife on her back; nudged Lady Machell, as the one who had known all about it from the beginning, they having laid the lines and pulled the ropes between them; chucked Hilda under the chin, and called her ‘pretty dear;’ mopped his face and cleared his throat lustily, wiping his eyes between whiles; what there was of honest and human in his soul stirred to its depths, while the vulgar self-glorification of the successful parvenu flowed like oil over the surface of the whole man.

Now he had touched the summit of his worldly ambition. Let but the bells ring out next year for the birth of his grandson, the future heir of Machells—Sir Gilbert de Paumelle Machell—and he would not have a wish ungratified.

‘What does it all mean?’ asked Guy Perceval of Hilda, looking slightly offended by these mysterious demonstrations of which he did not understand the import.

He liked to be at the back of matters, and resented exclusion from social council chambers.

‘I do not know,’ said Hilda. ‘It was all rather funny, I think.’

‘Silly, you mean,’ returned Guy shrilly, and Lady Machell heard him.

‘My son has just taken us all by surprise,’ she said, drawing nearer to Hilda and speaking in an undertone to Guy.

‘Why? What has he done?’ he asked.

‘Proposed to Miss de Paumelle,’ answered my lady, smiling sweetly at the owner of the Manor.

Would he dislike the alliance, or accept it benignly? His mood concerning it was of interest to her.

‘What a choice!’ cried Guy, in a voice not quite so subdued as my lady’s. ‘I would not marry her for the crown of England!’

‘No? She is however, one of the sweetest natures you can imagine. I have never seen a more charming person when once you get through her shy and diffident manner,’ my lady answered graciously. ‘I assure you Wilfrid in choosing her has consulted his happiness as well as his affection. She will make him a perfect little wife.’

‘Amiability and affection are good enough in their way,’ returned Guy, ‘and I am the last to deny their value; but they do not make up for the want of hæmatin in the blood, and of lime in the bones. That young lady is one of a kind whom no man who knew his duty should marry.’

‘We will feed her on oatmeal,’ said Lady Machell pleasantly; and the bait took.

For the next ten minutes Guy Perceval perorated; and by the end of that time he had talked himself into the belief that a course of phosphated and highly nitrogenous food might not only save the future Machells, but, even with this disastrous strain of Miss de Paumelle to intervene, might improve the race indefinitely.

Before an hour was over the room knew the secret of the evening. Mr. Brown de Paumelle whispered it in confidence to each of the superior guests, just as he had whispered the secret of what the ball had cost, and where he had got the supper and the decorations, the band and the appliances. Some laughed, and said that Captain Machell was a lucky fellow and my lady the cleverest woman out, and they supposed that old de Paumelle had made it worth their while, and would come down with something handsome. Some looked virtuous and highminded, and pretended to see in it a shameful bargain for so much money; in which they were not far wrong in fact, but as they guessed more than they knew, and their disapprobation was born of the Christian’s favourite virtue of detraction rather than of highmindedness, the close hitting of their chance shot did not score to the honour of their clearightedness. Some pitied Miss de Paumelle—poor, good, unpretending, little thing, as they called her—and said what a life she would have with that awful-tempered man, and that she was a great deal too good for him:—between Captain Wilfrid and his mother the poor little thing would be crushed! And others again, sneered at her and hers, and pitied Wilfrid, who however ought to have known better.

It made the staple of conversation for the next hour, and ran through the room like fire over dry grass; but the evening went on as if no such important event had happened, and Wilfrid gave

no sign that he saw the knowing looks which were sent his way when he stood up in the next quadrille with his future wife, and bore his humiliation as if he liked it.

The music and dancing continued, and the young enjoyed themselves after their kind. Lovers hid together in unfrequented places, the girls where their faces were most in shadow, and the men where what they said had least chance of being overheard; incipient flirtations advanced a stage or were blotted out altogether; Hilda fell to the share of those elder sons who would make good matches; and Muriel danced with Arthur Machell when not with Derwent, and with Derwent when not with Arthur. As Derwent could not get Hilda, he did his fraternal duty to perfection, and prevented all aspirants for his sister's regard indifferently with Guy. Arthur did not count. He was Hilda's brother and a link. Besides, he was an old friend, and Muriel was safe in his hands. So Arthur thought, and Muriel was not disposed to question that view of things for her own part.

But if Derwent could not appropriate for the evening, as he would have liked to have done, the little queen of his poetic dreams and the object of his impossible hopes, he thought that he might at least be allowed to dance with her once more. He had been often near her, looking for chances; and he had more than once exchanged a few words with her in the ballroom, or a glance while she was standing by her mother, if Lady Machell, intent on soothing Guy, had been careful to ignore his presence—always with unexceptionable breeding—and Guy himself had only acknowledged it by a look of disdain which fell on Derwent as the traditional dew falls on the proverbial granite.

Seeing her now standing silently by her mother, with a wistful glance turned towards the ballroom, and neither occupied nor amused, even Guy Perceval having deserted her for another conference with his able editor, Derwent resolved to try his fortune boldly. He was not likely to lose his chances in life for want of trying, nor to fail for lack of confidence in his power to win. Why indeed, should he be backward at this time or any other? Personally, and by family honour, he was the equal of any. Among the best who was better than he? Even looking at Lady Machell he said to himself, no one.

With his rather affected courtesy and supreme nineteenth century chivalry, he came up to where Lady Machell and Mrs. Brown de Paumelle were sharing the duties and dividing the responsibilities of the evening, and demanded the honour of Miss Machell's *hand for the galop* just then beginning.

A number of people were standing about, who heard and knew

that he had come up to ask Miss Machell to dance. Lady Machell was provoked; yet she did not like to offer a public affront to one who, after all, was substantially inoffensive and their quasi-intimate, if ineligible and a detrimental, so far as Hilda was concerned. And it would have been a public affront to deny him her daughter in one breath and give her to some one else in another. Nor did she wish to punish the child by not letting her dance as much as she would. Also, she was too content at the moment to be severe, too satisfied to be watchful. She had brought the most important ship of the family fortunes into port, and she could afford a little latitude to the other. And—Guy Perceval was not in the room, and probably would not return before the galop was at an end. And, even if he should—really, Lady Machell felt it was impossible to espouse his quarrel with the Smiths to such an extent as to cut them. Muriel had acted very well in the affair; so had Derwent; and no one was to blame but Guy himself for his folly. By-the-by, where was Arthur?

Hilda looked at her mother dutifully before she accepted; and Lady Machell, fencing with her consent for a moment by the question: 'Are you tired, Hilda?' said not too graciously, but not so disagreeably as might have been expected, or was likely to be noticed: 'If you are not tired, my dear, yes, you can dance with Mr. Smith; but do not fatigue yourself. You are sure you are not engaged?'

'Trust her to me, Lady Machell,' answered Derwent gallantly; 'I will take every care of her.'

And Hilda, looking at her card as if there might be a doubt about it, answered on her side:

'No, mother, I am not engaged, and I will not tire myself.'

On which Derwent bore her off, and once more tasted the dangerous joy of holding in his arms the girl whom it was folly to love, yet whom he had set before him as his highest hope to win.

During this galop, in which they made long and frequent pauses, Derwent said rather suddenly:

'When you are older and I am richer I intend to ask you a question—yes or no. Do you think your answer will be yes?'

'That depends on what it is,' she answered.

'You cannot guess?' was his reply, made tremulously.

'No; tell me now,' she said, with a pretty little coaxing way, a reminiscence of the nursery.

He took a bud of orange blossom from his waistcoat pocket. He had gathered it in the conservatory as an emblem.

'Look,' he said, slipping it into her small, white-gloved hand.

‘If you keep this for three years I shall know then that it will be yes. In three years’ time you will be of age and your own mistress, will you not?’

‘In three years and a half I shall be of age,’ answered Hilda. ‘I do not know about being my own mistress,’ she added discreetly; ‘mother will always be mistress.’

‘Would you be faithful to a lover whom your people—even your mother—did not like?’ asked Derwent abruptly.

‘That depends too,’ she answered in the same sweet childish way as before.

‘If you loved him?’

‘If I loved him; yes, I suppose I should,’ she said prettily.

‘And could you love a man who loved you and had no title, no wealth, and who had to conquer fortune for himself?’

All this was said while they were walking arm in arm round the room, running the risk of being seen through by sharp-eyed and experienced watchers, but thinking themselves as far from discovery as the ostrich does when it hides its head in the sand and leaves out its fluff and feathers.

‘Yes, I think so,’ said Hilda. ‘I do not think that I should care for money or title, or anything like that.’

At this moment, perhaps not; but as time went on and she knew the world better, and understood more clearly the relations between society and her own nature, she would.

‘Could you live simply for the sake of love?’ he asked.

‘Yes, of course I could,’ she answered. ‘I could do anything for the sake of love. We live simply now; but I love the father and mother, and we are very happy.’

‘You will keep that orange blossom,’ said Derwent, his hopes soaring high.

‘Three years and a half? Yes.’

‘And if you do not wish me to ask that question you will return it?’

‘Yes,’ she said; ‘but,’ looking up with her eyes wide open, and speaking with the sweetest and most child-like simplicity, ‘I shall keep it.’

‘You are an angel!’ murmured Derwent, strongly moved.

Still looking into his face, she asked with pretty surprise:

‘Why? Because I am going to keep a dear little flower, and answer a question three years hence?’

‘I am to blame. I am dishonourable,’ said Derwent to himself. ‘She is too innocent, too child-like to understand me. She is an angel of purity and I must not disturb her. I must leave her in her innocence and trust and wait.’

What Hilda thought she did not put into plain words. It would have been difficult. The thoughts of seventeen, even with six months added, are never very clear; and those of the child-girl, excited, fluttered, and a little frightened at what she was doing, were singularly confused. She was proud of her first essay into the independent life of womanhood, while always remembering that she was a Machell and her mother's daughter, and neither now nor ever the real owner of herself; she was as much in love with Derwent as such a girl naturally would be with such a youth, but half ignorant that this was love, and half desirous, half afraid, to learn the truth; she had a distinct consciousness that what she was doing and saying now would have excited the wrath of even her father—of even her brothers: what her mother would have said and felt she did not care to realise: yet she did not feel that there was any real harm in it all; she believed that this was making love, but she was not quite sure, not being well versed in the science even theoretically, but quite willing to accept it, if indeed it were love-making—though so strictly brought up, nature breaking out according to the proverb, and the discipline of the pitchfork of no avail when touched by the living force of youth and love; and all these thoughts and feelings made up a confused whole whence not much clearness could be extracted anyhow.

But the moment was pleasant; and as youth cherishes its moments as if they were eternities, the two young things played at rehearsing the great drama like the children they were, accepting unopened buds as the mature accept ripe fruits, and building their castles in the clouds with as much satisfaction as if they were palaces of stone and marble. It was the dawn of promise with them, not the day of fulfilment, and they were content with their shadows for substances and their hopes for realities.

While this was going on, Arthur and Muriel, in the garden among the flowers and in the moonlight, forgot the ball and its social exigencies in each other and their love. They had passed through the conservatory to the terrace before the banqueting-room, but they seemed to be too near the house there, with its noise and glare and movement; and almost unconsciously they found themselves in the rose-garden, just then in its perfection of early bloom. They were both silent; but it was that silence of lovers which is more eloquent than words—that silence which does not separate so much as bring hearts nearer together. It was as if each knew of what the other was thinking—as if each felt with and as the other.

Arthur stopped and broke off a rose. It was not an unopened bud like Derwent's orange blossom, but one in the moment of per-

fection—a blush-rose just between bud and flower—neither confined in its calyx nor fully blown. It was an unconscious bit of symbolism in both cases. He held the rose for a moment to his face, then said in a low voice, fuller of meaning in tone than word:

‘I want you to pick one for me. Will you?’

‘If you wish it,’ she answered, her voice veiled and uncertain.

‘Do you know what I shall think if you do?’ he asked.

She tried to laugh, but her laugh died away in the attempt.

‘That I have given you a rose,’ she said, with the boldest effort at subterfuge which perhaps she had ever made in the whole of her transparent life.

He covered with his the hand resting on his arm.

‘And what more?’ he asked.

She was silent, bending her head over the flower which she had plucked and which was in her disengaged hand.

‘Yourself, Muriel? your love? will you give me that as well as the rose?’

Still she did not speak. She could not. Joy has its trouble as well as sorrow, love its pain as well as grief. Only the night-ingales sang in the far off woods and the trees hard by; the moonlight shone pure and tender on the earth; from the house came streams of music softened by the distance; and the two standing there among the flowers seemed as if miles and months away from all human life save their own.

‘Speak to me,’ he pleaded, and of all the music floating about his voice was the most melodious to Muriel, of all the beauty in earth and sky her face the loveliest to him. ‘Muriel! tell me that you love me! My darling! you do not know how much I love you! how I have waited for this moment and tried to learn from you if I might speak or no. My darling, have I any hope? or have I deceived myself? Tell me, Muriel; tell me now at once. You do not know how terrible this suspense is to a man.’

His voice had broken a little towards the end. He did not think that he had deceived himself, but true love is always timid, and her silence troubled him.

‘I will give you the rose,’ said Muriel presently, in a low voice.

‘And your love with it?’

Her head bent lower. Then she lifted it up.

‘Yes,’ she said, and laid her hand on his arm.

He caught her to his heart.

‘Now I am strong enough for the fight!’ he cried. ‘Now nothing can conquer me or shall separate us. Give me the rose,

Muriel. My Muriel, my own, my love, my wife! It will be my sacred treasure now and for ever.'

She put it into his hand, and he kissed it boyishly; then took her face tenderly between both his hands and kissed her, and Muriel felt as if she had come for the first time to the knowledge of the true meaning of life. And perhaps she had.

The ball was at an end now for them, and its circumstances interested them no more than the actions of so many marionettes. The world and all that it contained was comprised in the love confessed between them. They forgot the dances to which they might or might not be pledged—forgot, she on her side Derwent and Guy Perceval, Lady Machell's cold looks and Wilfrid's dark ones, her mother at home, and the father whose coming she so earnestly desired; he, on his, the difficulties that were to be overcome and the opposition that he should have to encounter; they knew only the moonlight and the song of the nightingale, the flower scents that swept through the air, and the eyes that looked into each other's; the beating of his heart against her hand; the troubled breath and sweet emotion—so strange, so sweet—that checked her words and lowered her voice till he was forced to bend his head so near her face that his lips touched her full, soft hair, and he felt her breath on his forehead as it went and came in happy sighs. Even when the music ceased for the grand event of the evening, the supper, they were at first conscious only of a deeper feeling of content, and a more entire isolation as they still stood face to face in the rose-garden—their enchanted world.

But love itself has to come back to real life, and ecstasy must give way to conventionality and routine. The cessation of the music, at first so restful, finally awoke them to the fact that they must go in if they would not be remarked; and after more vows made and passionate declarations repeated—those declarations which never tire either in the saying or the hearing—they turned away to the house, and, passing through the conservatory, left Elysium for the dull prosaic world of common life and indifferent acquaintances.

The supper was, as has been said, the grand event of the evening. Mr. Brown de Paumelle took in The Countess, and The Earl took in Mrs. Brown de Paumelle; Lady Machell was on Mr. Brown de Paumelle's other hand, and Hilda was separated from her mother by Guy Perceval. Wilfrid and Jemima had the minor places of honour in the middle of the table, and Lady Machell had told off Lady Emmeline Herbert to Arthur as their *vis à vis*. But, for her first drop of bitterness in the cup of her success, Arthur proved himself a defaulter, and only when all were seated arrived

with Muriel on his arm, and something in the face of each which went like subtle poison to the roots of his mother's heart. This was no time however, for enquiry or dismay. If sufficient to the hour is its evil, so is its joy; and Lady Machell was eminently a woman of orderly arrangements and things in their right places and at fitting times. This sorrow must wait; for the present her life was full.

The supper ran through its appointed course, and it is to be hoped that those who ate it liked it; for, as the proud host said with swelling satisfaction, it had cost a tidy sum from first to last, and no expense had been spared to make it perfect of its kind.

But the moment of moments came, when, flushed with triumph and a little also with wine, more rubicund and elate than ever, more thoroughly old Brown the successful soap-boiler of Fore Street of his early days and less than ever the pretence of the county gentleman of his later ones, the host got on his legs, as he phrased it, and began his speech—the speech which was to crown the glad achievement of the evening. It was a speech made in bad English and worse taste; but the Machells bore it without wincing. He thanked his noble guests for the honour they had done him in coming to his humble abode, and he hoped that he should often welcome them there again; and a friendly welcome was worth more than a fine spread, said Mr. Brown de Paumelle, with affected depreciation of his velvety claret and dry champagne. He assured them of his pleasure in seeing around him so many noble names, and, not forgetting the ladies, so many pretty faces. But they need not blush. He was always fond of the ladies, but his own good lady was opposite, and he must mind his p's and q's, else somebody would not like it. Then he said that one of the ladies there, his own dear daughter, and as good as she was pretty (here Mrs. Brown de Paumelle wiped her meek eyes, and Jemima hung her head over her plate and crumbled her bread diligently) had just consented to take herself a lord and master for life, and he was proud to be able to say that in a few months he would be connected with one of the finest families in the county. He looked full at Wilfrid when he spoke, and winked jocularly at my lady. He then called on the company to drink, 'Health and long life to the young couple,' no daylight and no heel-taps.

All through he had said 'they was,' and 'you was;' once he thundered out at the top of his voice, 'which I were;' and he persistently dropped his h's where they were vital, and tacked them on where they were superfluous.

The well-bred gentlefolks crowding his table and accepting his hospitality looked at each other slyly and laughed; some sensitive

women coloured, and wished that he would sit down and not make such a dreadful exhibition of himself. Arthur wondered how Sir Gilbert and his mother could stand it, and hoped below his breath to Muriel that Wilfrid liked it: and Guy Perceval took Lady Machell down from her pedestal, and saw her as a commonplace person after all, to countenance such an alliance as this; but Sir Gilbert and my lady and Wilfrid himself sat with the stoical dignity of North American Indians at the stake, and not so much as the flutter of an eyelid betrayed what they suffered.

When the speech was finished Sir Gilbert got up, and in a few cold and quiet words made himself the spokesman of the thanks and congratulations which he was sure all the rest offered heartily; and with the health of the host and hostess the thing came to an end, and the tables broke up. The guests buzzed noisily to each other their comments on the whole affair, and the frightful vulgarity of making after-supper speeches at all; the band came back to their places from their supper; and the dancing began again as if it had never ceased. But the life of the evening had gone. The tide of departure set in, and one by one all the great people slipped away, with the consciousness of having performed a Christian act of neighbourly kindness which they were free to rejoice was at an end.

Lady Machell was one of the first to go. She pleaded Hilda's youth and her own headache when the terrified invertebrate hostess almost clung to her gown in her prayer that she should remain, and carried off her party—some out of weariness, others out of danger.

But not even her generalship sufficed for perfect safety; for Derwent managed to take Hilda to the carriage, pressing her hand with perilous tenderness as he wished her good night and whispered, 'Remember!' and Arthur put the crowning-stroke to his misdeeds by taking Muriel to hers—the two carriages standing in the rank before the door close together, and the Smiths' foremost—keeping his mother waiting while he bent forward to kiss her hand, saying, 'My darling! tell me you love me again!' more like a schoolboy than a man of the world, and to the great danger of being overheard.

Then they all drove to their respective homes, all absolutely silent. The Machells were divided between weariness and satisfaction; the Smiths were full of lovely dreams and brilliant hopes. Brother and sister sat hand in hand, happy in their silence till they reached home, when both sighed, looked at each other, and smiled. It was too new with each to speak to-night, but both meant to tell the other to-morrow, the one that Hilda understood

him, the other that Arthur loved her. Then they passed into the half-darkened hall, the evening at an end.

There their mother met them, coming out of the drawing-room to the side. Her face was pale, her eyes dark and glistening still with tears, but a wonderful light lay in them—the light of a woman's eyes who has seen the man whom she loves; and her lips were slightly swollen, reddened, parted, and smiling. She took a hand of each, and looked into their young bright faces, her own passionately moved between joy and something that was not joy—moved as they had never seen it before.

‘My dears,’ she said in a clear ringing voice, the servants standing about; ‘your father has come home.’

(To be continued.)

A Trifle.

THEY loved and laughed, they kissed and chaffed,

They threw the happy hours away :
That's the way the world goes round—
That's the story of Yesterday.

They talk of fate, and calculate,
And keep accounts, and measure, and weigh :
That's the way the world goes round—
That's the story of To-day.

They'll see on high in yonder sky
The God whose power destroyeth sorrow :
That's the way the world goes round—
That's the story of To-morrow.

MORTIMER COLLINS.

BELGRAVIA

JUNE 1877.

The World Well Lost.

BY E. LYNN LINTON.

CHAPTER XVI.

AT LAST!

HOME once more! How strange it all was to the weary long-time exile, and how strange he was to them—to the children above all! Was this the dear, gallant father to whose coming they had looked as the return of a king to his own? whose memory they had cherished as the one sacred poem of their lives—the one undimmed and lovely picture of their childhood? They remembered him as he was then, and as he had been when those numerous photographs, all in different moods and attitudes, had been taken—as he was when he had sat for that miniature which hung in the mother's room, enclosed in a Florentine mosaic frame, always locked, and which, as children, they had been allowed to see as their reward when they had studied diligently and been specially good.

He had had long dark hair then, falling in a picturesque way about his small head; he had had the daintiest moustache on his upper lip, and the curliest, softest fringe of whisker like masculine ringlets down his cheeks; now his hair was a dull, cold iron-grey, and if not cropped close to his head, yet short and straight; and his face was clean shaven. But that face itself, how changed! The portraits and their own remembrance gave the skin fair and delicate as a woman's, the features beautiful and refined, if always to the readers of faces weak and unsatisfactory; now the sallow, sodden flesh hung in bags under the eyes and about the jaw, and was deeply wrinkled everywhere; the eyelids were swollen, the eyes sunk and bloodshot; the mouth, which used to smile so readily, and of which the pleasure-loving lips were once so flexible and full of fun, full too of kisses for the little ones, and of that kind of general benevolence for all the world which springs from supreme content and

personal happiness, were now drawn, compressed, and marked with painful lines of suffering and reticence; the manner, so frank and joyous, with the same undisguised vanity in it that ran through Derwent's, had become nervous, timid, and, as it were, unnaturally prompt to answer and keen to attend. This gallant father of theirs, this exiled king come back to his own after such long years of absence, had the air of having been under strict rule, as if it had been his duty to obey sharply and to efface himself and his own individuality under the heavy weight of general discipline. With this strange reminiscence of past pain was also a certain manner of relief as of one having escaped from thralldom, which was not happiness as yet, and still less ease.

Also he seemed unaccustomed to things which to the children, as to all ordinary English gentlefolk, were as second nature; and he looked neither at them nor at the servants straight in the face. He looked at his wife, but only at her; and at her more as if seeking counsel and even protection—as if gathering courage and taking heart from her steadfast, calm, and resolute face—than for the mere love of looking at her. There was a distressing manner of almost abject humility about him; and it seemed as if the sweet service of love and respect which it was his right to receive from the children, and theirs to render, pained rather than delighted him; and beyond all this, he showed the most astounding ignorance of the events which had taken place in the world during the last fifteen years or so. He knew absolutely nothing. Had he been one of the Seven Sleepers awakened or Rip Van Winkle with his fifty years brought down to fifteen, he could not have been more cut off from the current life of history as it had flowed during that time.

When Derwent at breakfast the next day—the day after the night of his arrival—the day after the night of the ball with its fragrant memories for both the children—chanced to speak of something that had happened ‘about the time when Metz surrendered,’ and, turning to his father, said: ‘I forget the exact date; do you remember, father?’—he answered nervously: ‘No: I do not remember. What about the surrender of Metz?’ and looked at his wife as if for help.

‘What about the surrender of Metz?’ repeated Derwent. ‘Do you mean to say that you have not followed the history of the downfall of the French empire?—that you know nothing of the greatest event of modern times?’

His manner expressed his surprise; it was something indeed more than surprise.

‘You see I have been away for so long,’ said the father in a

tone of apology, gathering his breakfast-things together and piling them on his plate as if to take them away. 'One loses the lay of things easily.'

'Were you not able to have English newspapers sent to you?' asked Derwent. 'Mother!' reproachfully; 'why did you not send out papers to my father? You always knew where to find him.'

'They would have been of very little use, else I should,' answered Mrs. Smith calmly.

'No,' echoed her husband, as if glad to catch at the word; 'of very little use where I was; of none indeed I may say.'

'But where on earth can you have been all this time?' asked Derwent. 'We have often asked my mother, but she would never tell us.'

'Why make you anxious, Derwent?' said Mrs. Smith. 'When your father was in danger was it not better that I alone should bear the anxiety, instead of saddening you and your sister at your ages?'

'If you did not like to tell us at the time, I do not see why you should not have done so after, when he was safe again,' said Derwent. 'It seems so strange that we did not know where you were,' he continued, turning again to his father—'that we were told nothing about you; and stranger still that you should have come in this unexpected manner, as if you had dropped from the clouds. If you had known that my father was coming home like this, mother, I think you might have told my sister and me. It is scarcely fair on us—on me; for at least we are his children.'

He spoke sorely. He had long secretly resented his mother's unbroken reticence concerning this dear father of theirs, thinking both himself and Muriel badly used to be kept in such dense ignorance; but himself especially, as the son and heir and representative of masculine supremacy generally. There was something in it all that troubled him; and the manner and personality of his father, now that he had come home, troubled him still more.

'I have been a long way off,' said the father evasively. 'There was no use in telling you all my stations.'

'What my mother knew, I had the right to know also,' said Derwent a little stiffly.

'You heard my reasons,' put in the mother with a pleasant manner—a manner strangely different from that air of icy self-control to which she had accustomed the children for all their lives. Now she was caressing, almost playful; acting her new part with the same perfection and thoroughness as she had played her old; and mistress of herself and her aims now as she had been then.

'They were kind, mother; you always are kind,' Derwent answered; 'but for all that I think them inadmissible. You treated me as a child, and I am a man.'

'To a mother her son is always a child,' said Mrs. Smith with a light laugh. 'It is so difficult to realise the passing of time and to know the exact moment when one's son ceases to be a child and becomes a man. And you are not yet twenty-one, which might perhaps have been a halting-place.'

'Well, now that it's all over and you have not been scalped by the savages nor eaten by the lions, you must tell us your adventures,' said Derwent, looking at his father, his humour sounding a little unnatural.

The man glanced at him with evident uneasiness. Mrs. Smith turned with a responsive smile to her son, with an untroubled look to her husband. Her face seemed to promise volumes of history and adventure for the young people's pleasure.

'Yes, dear papa,' said Muriel, slipping her hand into his. 'You must tell us of your travels. How much you must have seen, moving about as you have done! Have you made any collections? brought home any curiosities? When will they come?'

'No,' said Mr. Smith, shifting his feet and rearranging his breakfast-things, 'I have no collections. At least,' he continued, covering his mouth with his hand and looking down, 'those which I made have got lost.'

'What a pity!' cried Muriel. 'What were they? where were you last, papa? and were they from Africa, or where?'

For some inscrutable reason Derwent had fixed on Africa as the scene of his father's wanderings, and of course what he had believed Muriel had believed too.

'I cannot tell you of these past years just yet; I will some day, but not now,' answered the father, speaking nervously and looking to his wife.

'Your father is too glad to be quietly at home once more to care to remember all those dreadful wanderings and experiences for the first days,' said Mrs. Smith with a pleasant smile. 'He would rather forget them and think only of you and home. He is tired yet, and you must curb your impatience, my child. Is that too hard a trial? I do not think you are either impatient or inquisitive, my Muriel.'

'It was foolish of me not to understand that; and the travels will come in for the long evenings when you are rested, dear,' was Muriel's loving response.

'Yes,' said Edmund Smith with a constrained air; 'for the long evenings when I am rested.'

'Did you ever come across Livingstone, father?' asked Derwent, who seemed a little cruelly determined to press him. Yet the lad was not naturally cruel, and he had loved the remembrance of this father with an idealising idolatry equal to Muriel's.

'No,' he answered. 'Has he returned?'

'He is dead,' replied Derwent slowly, fixing his eyes steadily on the African traveller who did not know the fate of the king of African travellers. 'Did you not know even that?'

'I had forgotten,' he answered quickly.

A sharp flash of pain passed over the boy's face, but he still looked across the table steadily and curiously. There was no love in his eyes now; no tenderness, no pity; only a stern and watchful inquisitorial expression, the look of one who suspects wrong and is determined to find out where it lies.

The restless furtive eyes, always glancing here and there, looking at nothing straightly save that one dear woman who looked ever at him with so much love, so much devotion in her beautiful face and tender smile, turned away uneasily at the questioning gaze in the young fearless face which followed his with the stern inquiry of roused suspicion and hard determination to know the truth, evidently hidden now.

'Well, my boy,' he said after a time, with a weak attempt at playfulness; 'shall you know me again?'

'I should know you again as you are, but I should not have said you were the father whom I remember,' said Derwent slowly. 'I cannot see a trace of the father whom I recollect so clearly and whom we have in the photographs and my mother's miniature of you—nor a trace of the manner, nor the man whom I remember.'

'No?' he answered.

His accent was not pleasant, but perhaps not so much displeased as troubled.

'Fifteen years have made as much difference with your father as with yourselves and with me. But we remain the same people substantially, in spite of all outside changes,' said Mrs. Smith, that sweet and playful smile which hitherto had been so rare that the children scarcely recognised it as belonging to her, coming again about her lips. Was she too changing as much as he?—were they going to lose both mother and father as they had hitherto known them?

She looked at her husband fondly—her eyes soft and warm with that tender half-maternal love which a true woman feels for the man whose life that love of hers can bless—for the man who has come out of the fight maimed and wounded, and who, in his

sorrow and humiliation, is infinitely dearer than the lusty conquerors full of pride and glory; that tender, yearning, self-devoted love which accepts the burden, no matter how heavy, if by accepting it the beloved can be relieved and set free; which bears on its own heart the cross of his despair, and asks, as its sole reward, the privilege to bless.

‘Yes, I suppose we also are altered out of all knowledge,’ said Derwent coldly.

‘Out of all knowledge,’ repeated his father a little emphatically.

He wished to convey, without expressing, the sense of a displeasure which Derwent was not surprised that he should feel.

‘You will soon learn us, darling papa,’ said Muriel, meaning that love would teach him as it would teach them.

He pressed her hand, still held in his own, and turned to her with a pathetic half-timid smile, his eyes full of tears.

‘Dear, dear papa!’ she cried, taking his hand between both her own and raising it with tender reverence to her lips.

A deep flush came over the man’s face. He drew his hand away with a repelling gesture.

‘Don’t do that!’ he cried sharply.

Muriel’s eyes dilated and in their turn filled with tears. Why should she not kiss his hand in token of the reverent love righteously carried by a daughter to her father?—and such a father!—a man so good, so gentle, so noble-minded, so honourable!

‘You have been so long unaccustomed to home life and all its ways that it comes quite strange to you, dear, to be caressed,’ said Mrs. Smith, laughing. ‘Your father has not been accustomed to have a nice little daughter about him of late,’ she continued, speaking to Muriel in a tone and manner completely foreign to her usual self, and which grated on Derwent as if she had suddenly appeared in masquerade. ‘He has to learn how to be loved again. We must teach him, children.’

‘Yes,’ said Muriel with a half sob, so full of pity for that dear papa in not having been homed and loved for so long—so full of desire to make it up to him now by loving him so much, by making him so happy! She put her arms round his neck, and kissed him. Somehow this morning she had become like a little child again.

‘Own dear, dear papa, you must be happy now,’ she said laying her fresh cheek against his. ‘We will all be happy; how can we be otherwise, when you have come back?—but you the happiest of all.’

‘This is too much. I do not deserve it,’ said Edmund Smith in a half-suffocated voice, and for a moment he seemed as if he would

have turned away, or have repulsed her again as he had done before ; but the impulse, if it existed, passed, and he took her in his arms with a feverish kind of fervour, a mixture of gratitude and humiliation in his love inexpressibly painful, and as strange as painful in a father embracing his child after a life-long absence.

Mrs. Smith rose and went over to Derwent. She looked anxious but resolute ; he was pale, his dark eyes watchful, fixed, his lips a trifle set, his whole face with a certain latent sternness underneath a very evident pain that showed his mother both the extent and the character of the conflict within. If she could but break it all down now at once and for ever !—if she could but subdue him, and charm those unformed but roused suspicions to rest !

‘Go and kiss your father, my dear,’ she said in a soft whisper, hanging over him and smoothing his forehead as she had not for more years than he could remember ; not since that father had gone away. ‘You are but a child yet ; kiss him, dear.’

He looked into her eyes as she bent over him—eyes that pleaded for her husband with her son—eyes full of love for each, full of infinite pity for each ;—but that expressed her determination to stand by the man whose ruined life she was giving both herself and her children to build up again. His own, dark and sorrowful as they were, flashed back something which told her that her prayer was useless, and that the future had a pain and peril before it which, if she had foreseen, she had scarcely counted on as so inexorable as she found it.

‘No mother,’ he answered ; ‘I cannot.’

‘My boy ! why ?’ she urged.

He gave her a long long look, half reproachful, half grieving.

‘You know better than I why,’ he answered ; ‘but you know that my instinct is right and that I ought not.’

‘You ought !’ she returned firmly ; but she still caressed him, smoothed his hair, kissed his forehead, hung over him—this calm cold stately mother of theirs who had kept herself so far apart from her children, seeming to fear the very expression of their love and her own as something that would break down her strength and make her way still more difficult than it was already—now hanging about him like a gushing girl, her caresses embarrassing him more than they cheered, and almost unwelcome in their warmth !

‘Mother ! can you say that to me !’ he answered with the proud little action habitual to him.

‘I can—and do—you are his son. Go to him, Derwent, think what he has suffered, and welcome him home, my boy. He is your father, and he loves you.’

‘No, I cannot,’ he said again. ‘He is not the father whom I

knew. He is some one whom I do not know, mother. I cannot welcome him !’

‘Derwent !’ she pleaded.

‘Dear mother, let me go ! I am one too many here,’ he said, pressing her to him with a nervous strain.

Then he put her gently but resolutely from him, and with one look at Muriel abruptly left the room, knowing for the first time in his life the torture of suspicion of his own, and fear of the truth.

This father of theirs who had returned like a thief in the night, what was he ? what had he done ? whence had he come ? where had he been ? The mystery which of late he had begun to feel hung over him, had suddenly consolidated into absolute certainty of something concealed and to be concealed. But what was it that had to be concealed ? It must be something shameful, for we do not conceal our honours, thought Derwent, as he paced through and through the shrubbery walks, suffering as he had never suffered in his life before—suffering as he had never expected to suffer. This beloved father, whose return had been so anxiously expected, so longed for, so desired, coming now with the atmosphere of—what ?—about him !

The boy could not say what that atmosphere was. His knowledge of real life was slight yet, and he had only the instincts of pride and purity to guide him. But these told him that something was gravely amiss, and that the exiled king of his own and his sister’s love was but a sorry kind of pretender—the god of their tender worship but one of that race of veiled prophets for whom reverence is in proportion to ignorance, and for whom knowledge destroys respect. It was a terrible experience to him, poor fellow ; the falling of more than a youthful house of cards ; and he might be forgiven if he made the most of it as his form of self-respect, and in the repudiation of his father’s secret fault, whatever it might have been, unconsciously plumed himself on his own integrity, and carried out the motto of his family from honour into cruelty.

But what can virtuous youth be save cruel ? It is only experience which creates sympathy ; and none but those who have passed through temptations can fairly appreciate the difficulty of resistance—or the pitifulness, rather than the shameful, of failure.

CHAPTER XVII.

‘WHAT DOES IT MEAN ?’

‘CONSTANCE, I cannot bear it ! That child’s innocent love cuts me to the heart. It makes me blush and tremble, and feel as if I

profaned her by allowing her to love me ! And yet there is something in Derwent that is even worse to bear. I, who am his father, and who loved him so much in olden days, and have loved him so much through all this sad time—to see him turn from me as he does—to see him eye me as he does—oh wife ! wife ! it is hard !’

It was Edmund Smith who said this when he and his wife were alone after breakfast, in her private sanctuary where not even business was suffered to disturb her—which neither the children nor the servants dared to invade. He threw himself on his knees before her sitting on the low chair by the window, where she had passed so many hours looking down the valley to the open country beyond, thinking of him, picturing his return, and this hour which had now come, when she should hold him once more clasped to her heart—that refuge which should never fail him—that throne whence he should never be deposed—that altar whose sacred fire burning in his honour should never be quenched.

Passing his arms round her waist he buried his face in her lap, sobbing hysterically. Whatever his life might have been during these fifteen years, it was one that had destroyed both his nerve and his manhood ; one that, as with Bob Rushton, made tears flow too readily because self-respect had become too difficult, and that had sent him back to his home less the husband and father returning to his own than a shamed and saddened penitent creeping to a place if not forbidden yet substantially forfeited.

She lifted his head and drew it gently to her bosom. The infinite tenderness of her touch, the womanly pity that was in it, the womanly passion of love and sympathy and honour that she conveyed by look and gesture sank like balm into his heart ; and as she passed her hand caressingly over his face and head—as just now she had caressed her son—it was like a charm for the sweet sense of peace and rest that it conveyed.

‘ You must not think of the past, my darling,’ she said in her sweetest voice ; and she could make her voice like music when she chose. ‘ It is done with—all its sorrow and its mistake. If you failed, dear, you failed for a noble motive, and you have expiated a boyish error by a man’s suffering.’

‘ Yes,’ he said with a shiver ; ‘ it has been suffering, Constance ! But so is this.’

‘ No, this has to be happiness to you,’ she answered again, tenderly. ‘ It is strange just at first ; and you have come back to us with your poor heart sore and sensitive. A few days’ quiet and habit will accustom you to it all, and then you will begin to feel at home and your real self. This self is not the real man’—lightly but lovingly—‘ you will have to discard it.’

'Ah, Constance, if I had only been worthy of you!' he cried, breaking down again into weeping.

Poor fellow! it was all the same to him whether it was love or reproach, caress or repugnance; each stung him equally, and each overcame him equally.

'You are and were only too good for me,' she answered. 'What sent you wrong was your very love for me. My silly childishness that did not see we were going too fast was that which was most to blame. If I had looked into matters as I ought, I should have seen it all in time, and perhaps I might have prevented the end of all! Do you not believe, Edmund, that I have thought of this, and remembered my own faults and follies bitterly enough?'

'Not a word of that!—not a word!' he said. 'You were always what you are now, an angel, just as our Muriel is. You had nothing whatever to do with it; it was my fault only. Let the blame fall where it is due—on my miserable, miserable head.'

'You shall not blame yourself so much, dear,' said Mrs. Smith. 'You were more sinned against than sinning. You did what you did for me and the children, not for yourself. And I say again, I should have seen more closely into matters. If I had, I might have prevented what came by drawing in in time.'

He raised his head and looked at her.

'Do you think so?' he asked. 'We did go too fast, Constance—awfully fast! Could you have prevented it, dear?'

'Yes. I was the most to blame,' she said firmly.

He seemed to consider, to reflect, for just a moment.

'No,' he then said with a curious air of conscious magnanimity. 'You were not to blame; it was only I; but what you say is true. Certainly I did not do it for myself. However wrong, it was for my wife and family, not myself. It would be false to say the contrary. For myself, I could have given up everything when I found out how I stood. I was a man and it did not signify for me; but I could not bear the thought of seeing you in any worse position than what you had held; and to deprive the children of their rights—no! that was impossible. But still, all this was not for myself; that I may say with truth and confidence.'

While he had spoken a soothed, it might almost be called a self-satisfied, expression had stolen over his worn and haggard face. The vanity which the sharp discipline of these long years had only pruned not killed, was ready to reassert itself at the first warm breath of praise; and in proportion to the depth of his past humiliation would be the strength of his future self-justification. It was her knowledge of this characteristic—which she saw as sensitiveness, tenderness of soul, impressibility by affection—that had helped his

wife in her determination to restore him to his own esteem. She knew that it could be done; and when done she knew that he would be happy as in the olden times; and to make him happy again was the one sole aim of her life now, as it had been the one sole hope of all those dreary fifteen years.

'So that you have no need to blame yourself so bitterly, my dear; no need to lose your self-respect or to feel that our love goes beyond your deserving,' she returned. 'You loved much, and you sinned through that love; but the motive was good and true,' she repeated warmly; 'and God judges by motives not by actions. You have paid your debt to man.'

'I feel that God has forgiven me long ago,' said her husband simply. It was as if he had said that his fault, whatever it might be, had been too insignificant for the Almighty to take much cognisance of. 'It was more an offence against man than God,' he added; 'and as you say, Constance, I have paid my debt there—to the full!' with a bitter emphasis, as if he had paid more than his due, and was the one injured rather than guilty.

'Just so,' said Mrs. Smith; 'that is the way in which to look at it, dear.'

'But when the children come to learn the whole story—as they must some day—I cannot bear to think of that!' he cried, changing suddenly from his more complacent mood to that of the deep and blank despair which for the moment was the more habitual. 'It would have been far better to have made me dead, Constance, as I suggested, and to have discarded me for ever, than to have brought me back to them what I am. What will they feel—what will they think of me when they find it all out? Ah, that will be my trial, if you like!'

'They will feel and think as I do,' said his wife lovingly. 'They will have learned to know you then, really, as you are; and knowing you, dear, they will love you so much that they will understand you and the whole affair, and be able to separate the chance deed from the true self. Is that so hard to do for one we love?' she asked, bending her head and kissing his forehead.

'Not hard for you, for we loved each other—did we not, Constance? But to them? They are young and do not know either life or me.'

'You are their father,' she said.

'And perhaps the disgrace of the father will come upon them more terribly than even the ruin of the husband to my wife—my loving, faithful, but also beloved wife!'

He looked up into her face as he said this. He meant to remind her that if she had loved him so had he loved her, and that so far he had claims.

'They must not feel it so bitterly; and Muriel shall not, and will not,' said Mrs. Smith with emphasis. 'They must bear it as both you and I, the father and mother, have had to bear it. We are all one family, and you are our head; we must stand or fall together. There was never any question with me, darling, of making you dead. Did I not promise you for better and for worse?—and did you expect me to fail you when that worse came? No! not even for our children, much as I love them and feel for them!'

'Ah, yes—much as you feel for them. You know you pity them, Constance. You know that they are to be pitied,' he cried quickly.

'Yes; they are to be pitied for many things,' she answered quietly.

He dropped his arms from her waist, and made a movement as if he would have got up from his knees; but she brought him back to her bosom, and went on speaking as if without that interruption.

'They are to be pitied for the loss of the dear father for all these years. Think what a fine and manly influence you would have been over our boy—what a help and support to him and to Muriel too! That has been the worst trial of all to me, with respect to them.'

'I think I should have done Derwent some good,' he said, with a pleased air. 'And Muriel too.'

'Every good,' she answered.

'But you have done well by them, wife,' he said. 'I ought to thank you for this too—for your care of my children.'

'I taught them to love and respect their father as he deserves,' was her reply.

'Will they always?' he said.

'Always.'

He took her hands and kissed them; and still kneeling by her side, with his head on her bosom and his arms round her waist, he presently sank into a light slumber from very weariness and exhaustion, while she bent over him and watched him with tears in her eyes, as a mother might have watched her child.

Changed as he was, with all the beauty, all the gallant grace, the gay good-humour and young man's pride crushed out of him, he was still the man whom she loved and the man who loved her—the man for and to whom she was prepared to sacrifice the whole world—her children and his with the rest. She had no blame for him. Whosoever might condemn him—man, the law, society, his own conscience when it spoke louder than his vanity—with her he *should* know nothing but the love which soothes, the respect which

restores. He was her lover, her husband, and she would never be other than the adoring woman on whose fidelity and affection he could rely as men rely on the sweet services of nature and the unchanging glory of heaven.

So she sat and watched him, feeling only that infinite pity and protection of the woman for the man who takes refuge from sorrow and himself in her arms, no matter what crime he may have committed nor to what base level he may have sunk in the esteem of his fellows. For of all things high and great and strong, the love of the loving woman for him who needs her and whom she can help, is the greatest and the noblest and the best.

Meanwhile, Derwent and Muriel in the garden, where she had gone to find him, discussed this dear father of theirs who had returned so unexpectedly, and at such an important moment in the life of each—though neither knew as yet what had happened to the other; that Derwent's boyish love had passed like an awakening breath over Hilda's young life; that Arthur had asked Muriel to give herself to him for ever, and that Muriel had promised that she would and meant to keep her word.

Muriel spoke of dear papa with frank affection, and something of her mother's womanly pity, if with less than that mother's knowledge why he should be pitied; but Derwent spoke coldly and with reserve, showing that his heart was sore and his thoughts not wholly pleasant; indeed, not pleasant at all. It was their different mode of testifying to the same thing—the father was not what they had expected him to be, and not as they had remembered him; but Muriel was sorry and sympathetic, Derwent was suspicious, disappointed, and revolted.

The girl saw that something was wrong with her brother, but she did not ask him what it was. She had been too well tutored in the arbitrary little ways of fraternal domination to try and force his confidence. She knew that it would come in time and by itself; but she also knew how to wait.

At last Derwent said in a constrained voice:

'How fearfully changed he is, Muriel! I can scarcely believe that he is the same father whom we remember in London. There is something about him that pains me more than I can say. He is so strange—he does not look one straight in the face—and he has forgotten so many of the ordinary habits of a gentleman. Did you see how he cut his bread in his hand, just as the common people cut theirs?—and why did he put his cup and saucer on his plate, and make that odd movement as if he were going to take them all away? My mother stopped him just in time, else he would.'

‘He has been so long among savages, it is only natural that he should forget these little forms,’ said Muriel. ‘He will be one of the first to see and laugh at his mistakes when he has got accustomed to things again.’

‘But where on earth has he been for all these years?—what has he been doing?’ cried Derwent impatiently. ‘I cannot understand how it is that he knows nothing of what has taken place in England—in Europe indeed; not even the downfall of the French empire, or the death of the emperor. Where can he have been?—what can have happened to him?’

‘We shall soon know all now,’ said Muriel. ‘When he is a little rested he will tell us of his travels and adventures, and then we can understand him better.’

‘Shall we? Has he been honestly travelling?—if he has, with what object?’

Derwent spoke passionately. A half-formed suspicion was beginning to dawn on him, but he did not dare yet to put it into words.

‘I do not understand you,’ answered Muriel steadily. ‘Has he been travelling? of course he has! And as for the object, it may have been business, or exploring, or excavation, or something like that.’

‘If business, we should have heard something; and if exploring, he would have published what he had done and where he had been; and so with excavation. It is none of all these, Muriel—at least, it is not business that could be spoken of.’

‘What makes you speak like that, Derwent?’ she asked. ‘If you do not understand papa, I am sure I do not understand you!’

‘I can see that I pain you, Muriel, but I think it my duty to be frank,’ said Derwent with his lofty air; ‘though I cannot tell you quite what I do mean, for I scarcely know myself. I am disappointed—bitterly disappointed in my father; there is something in it all that I do not understand—a secret, a mystery of some kind kept from us, and I want to fathom it but cannot.’

‘Why do you think so, dear? Why fancy things that do not exist, and torment yourself for nothing?’ she asked again. ‘He has been so long away that he scarcely knows where to begin. But we shall hear everything soon. You may be sure of that.’

‘We shall never hear all, never know the truth!’ cried Derwent, flinging back his hair.

‘Derwent! you should not speak so of poor papa!’ cried Muriel warmly; then, seeing how pale and agitated her brother was, that soft heart of hers warmed to him as well as to her father, and she put her arm through his caressingly as she said tenderly:

‘My dear, what can I say to comfort you? How pale you are! Oh, why have you made yourself so miserable, and all for a mere fancy!’

‘Neither you nor anyone else can comfort me if——’ he began; then he hesitated. His suspicions had made his father a slave-dealer in Africa. It was all and the worst that he could think of; but it was so bad that he did not like to give it the vitality of words, or to say even to Muriel what it was that he suspected.

‘If what?’ she asked.

‘If anything has been wrong with my father,’ he answered, his lips quivering and his nervous nostrils widely dilated.

‘Wrong about papa? What could have been wrong? Ask your own heart—how could he have done anything wrong? He may not like to tell us all that has happened to him; but wrong,—no, darling! I can never believe anything against papa! Poor dear papa! Just come home after such a long absence, and you think evil of him. Oh, Derwent, that is not like you!’

Tears came into her eyes as she spoke. She loved her brother truly; but at the moment she pitied her father even more than she loved Derwent.

‘You know, Muriel, that I was as eager to see him as you were, and that I have always loved him as much as you have—as much as any son could love a father! But now that he has come, I am as sure as of my own existence that something is not right, and that my mother did not tell us anything about him simply because she could not—because she dared not. If I find it out—and I will, that I swear—I will go away and never be heard of again.’

‘And leave mamma and me?—and break our hearts? Is that what you mean to do, Derwent?’

‘My own heart would be broken first,’ he answered. ‘I could not live through it here! To have anything come out against us in this place where we have lived so long, and held our heads so high—I could not bear it, Muriel! Fancy the Machells hearing anything, or Hilda—Lady Machell forbidding her to speak to me again, and she herself feeling that she would rather not! Impossible! I should go mad!’

‘Derwent, don’t! How can you say such dreadful things!’ cried Muriel, trembling. ‘I do not believe a word of it all—not a word; but it terrifies me to hear you speak like this! What can come out against us? How can you talk so wildly? Dear, look at things more rationally, and be yourself again!’

‘I am rational, I am myself, and I do look at things fairly; and it is because I do that I foresee all this evil and sorrow,’ said Derwent firmly, if still as passionately and excitedly as before. ‘And I tell you again that I would leave this place for ever—I would never

come back, never see one of them again! If the day ever comes when Lady Machell will have the right to say that my father's son may not presume to love her daughter, from that time my fate is sealed, and everything is over. I am only sorry for what I said last night—for having got her promise as I did.'

'Are you engaged to Hilda?' the sister asked in a low voice.

'Not exactly, but almost. We understand each other,' he answered; 'and if all goes well here at home, that will go well too. If it does not——'

His voice broke; he stopped, and turned away his head. In another moment, had he continued speaking, he would have burst into tears. He was only a youth yet, and Hilda was his first love.

Muriel clung closer to his arm, with a caressing gesture, but she did not speak. For the moment she forgot the cause of all this unhappiness, and only pitied the misery. It was no longer her father who was vaguely suspected of evil-doing, but her brother who was breaking his heart as the prophet of his own despair.

'I would not leave you, Muriel,' then said Derwent, laying his hand on his sister's and looking at her fondly; 'I would take you with me and we would live always together, friends and companions to the last!'

Muriel, who had been looking up at him while he spoke, suddenly crimsoned from neck to brow, and turned away her eyes, even more troubled than he himself had been. Had he said this yesterday morning she would have joined hands with him, and have agreed to be his Ruth, following him wherever he had chosen to go. She would have felt that now, when mamma was rewarded for her long years of constancy and consoled for their pain, her own place was with her brother whose companion she had always been, and whom she alone could make happy. But since last night—how could she promise to go with him? to give up all for him? She was not her own to give away. She no longer belonged to herself; she was Arthur's; and she did not think that Arthur would hold her so lightly as to allow the transfer, even to her brother. Nor, much as she loved that brother, did she wish to make it.

Derwent saw her blush and troubled looks; and the embarrassed silence which came instead of the ready response that he had expected, fell on his heart, sore as it was with disappointment and foreseen despair, like acid touching a wound.

'Good God, Muriel, why do you look like that!' he cried. 'You turn away from me—you do not say that you will come with me—you have not a kind word for me any way. Are you

too going to prove false to me? What is happening! It seems as if the whole world had gone wrong since last night.'

'Nothing is going wrong, and no one is false to you, dear,' she answered in a low voice; 'but I have something to tell you.'

'What can you have to tell me?' he asked suspiciously. 'More mysteries? and you making them?'

'Do not speak as if you were angry with me,' she said, beginning to tremble again.

'No, I am not angry, but I am hurt,' he answered. 'I never expected that you would have had a secret from me; and I am surprised—that is all.'

'Derwent! don't! I could not tell you before,' she pleaded. 'Arthur Machell spoke to me last night.'

'Well?' he answered, half indifferently.

He had so little idea that Arthur Machell could have anything to say to his sister beyond the merest outside facts of life—so little suspicion that things stood as they did with them—that Muriel felt she must be straightforward and explicit, and that hints and timid suggestions would be worse than useless.

'He asked me to marry him,' she said softly.

It was hard to confess so directly this young love, even to her brother from whom she had never yet had a secret; but it was the best way; and like one sharp and sudden pain it saved her from longer moments of suffering.

'Marry Arthur Machell?—you cannot, you shall not, Muriel!' he cried, dropping her hand and facing her.

'Why not?' she asked with a little start and half-frightened look.

'With no money on either side?'

'We can live on very little,' was her vague and not very rational reply.

She had not considered ways and means yet. Besides, to a girl in love, the man whom she loves is in himself a mine of wealth, representing as he does all the riches of happiness and the treasures of good fortune to her.

'And with my father?' he asked.

'Yes, with papa,' she answered more steadily. To shift the ground from vague and in their very vagueness terrifying and perhaps unconquerable circumstances to something tangible—to that dear papa whom she believed as much as her brother distrusted—was to reassure. 'Yes, certainly with poor papa,' she repeated.

'When I feel that I may have to give all *my* happiness—that I may have to leave home and Hilda and never see either again?' he asked.

'Perhaps you need not, any more than I need give up Arthur,'

she answered, a sunny smile flashing over her sweet face, which even Derwent, in spite of his tragic mood, felt to be almost contagious.

'You must be guided by my mother and Lady Machell,' then said Derwent, taking refuge in the inner lines.

'Mamma will not object. Why should she?' said Muriel.

'But Lady Machell will,' he returned. 'You know that she will, Muriel, as well as I know it.'

'If she does, I do not think that he'—the beloved man is always that undesignated but predominant 'he' to the woman who loves him—'will give me up. He is not a boy now, and I do not think that he will be frightened away from me, even if his mother should not like it.'

She spoke with a rather unusual dash of pride and firmness in her tone. Soft as she was for herself, she could do battle for those whom she loved. She had already stood by her father; and she could do the same for her lover and her love.

'But I should object, Muriel, most strongly, if Lady Machell does,' said Derwent. 'I would not have my sister enter a family where she would not be welcome.'

'I would rather have Lady Machell's consent and that she should like me, of course,' said Muriel; 'but I think I would do as he wished, even should she not. I think I should feel that he was the best judge, and that I married him, not his mother; and that if he wished it, my duty was to obey him. Would you not like Hilda to feel the same for you, dear?'

Derwent was silent. Through all the froth and seething vanity of his youth there was substantial justice and magnanimity of nature. He had been superficially spoilt by the life at home, where he had been caressed and praised and loved over-much; but after a few apprentice years to suffering and self-reliance of a nobler kind than he knew now—when his self-reliance was mainly self-conceit—he would come out into the light of day a truer, braver, better man than he gave promise of for the moment. He could not gainsay his sister. He knew that, as she said, he would take Hilda from her family, against the consent of father, mother, brothers, all, and against the wishes of his own people equally, could he but get her for himself—could he but build a fitting bower for so rare and sweet a bird; and what was right for him ought also to be the rule for his sister. Neither could he blame her for a constancy which he would ask from his own love.

All the same—his truer manliness not having come yet—he was hurt and distressed to think that Muriel should or could love anyone so much as to voluntarily give up him, Derwent, for the

sake of that other. She should have waited until she had seen how things had turned with himself and Hilda, and then she might have made her own happiness when his had been secured. As it was, she was cruel and selfish to leave him for any other love: what love indeed could there be to equal his in intensity or righteousness of claim? And now, with this formless pain and dread about the father, surely she was infinitely cruel—infinitely wrong!

He could scarcely say all this. She had accepted his confession of love for Hilda so sweetly, so unselfishly, it would be hard on her if he showed himself less brave. He must not speak all that he felt even to her; from henceforth he must be sufficient for himself, and bear his solitude as he best could. If he could not say all this, however, he looked it; and poor Muriel was made as wretched by his eyes as she would have been by his words. For these—all that he said was:

‘We must see how things turn out here at home, Muriel, before anything can be definitely arranged;’ speaking with as much mournfulness as if he had been speaking of a death, not a bridal.

‘Things are sure to turn out well here,’ answered Muriel.

And as she said this, the lodge gates opened and Arthur Machell came up the drive on his natural errand of seeing Mrs. Smith—the wife of Edmund Smith who had just returned from Africa—that he might get her formal consent to his engagement with her daughter.

CHAPTER XVIII.

NOT YET.

MEN seldom see the future which lies immediately before them. They spend their strength in bewailing, perhaps in providing for, remote possibilities which may never come to pass, while they do not even rub their eyes to see more clearly the events running swiftly to meet them. Thus Arthur Machell anticipated only smooth sailing and no kind of danger with Mrs. Smith. With his own mother he knew that he should have trouble enough and to spare; but that this secluded wife of an absent husband, this woman of unknown antecedents and mediocre means, this mother of a dowerless daughter—however lovely and divine in herself, still not a matrimonial prize as the world apportions its market—should object to the marriage of that daughter with him—he a Machell and she only a Smith—was a possibility in the decrees of fate which had not occurred to him.

He had only one duty and only one pain. The first was to make a new career for himself; the second to withstand the angry

sorrow of his father, the prayers and tears of his mother, the heavy-handed disdain of Wilfrid, and in all probability eternal separation from Hilda for the sake of love and Muriel. Her sweet consent gained last night among the flowers, all the rest was easy on this side. There were no breakers ahead between him and Owlett, no sunken rocks nor wrecking shallows; only a broad smooth sea, safe, calm, and sure. And as for the difficulties known and foreseen—those he would provide for and overcome.

As he came up the drive, resolute and joyous, his well-knit figure tall, soldierly, erect, striding between the flowers and flowering bushes with the haste of a lover seeking his beloved, it was to Muriel as if a bit of sunshine had suddenly flashed out of the grey sky, making that which was colourless and cold full of warmth and life. He might have been Apollo showing himself to some adoring nymph for the exquisite delight of his presence; but to Derwent he was simply a young man like any other, who had been successful where he himself had been if not defeated yet certainly not victorious. And as all men are jealous, more or less, and as Derwent was inclined to the more rather than the less, it was not specially exhilarating to him to see Arthur Machell triumphant where he was cast down. Naturally too he was not charmed with the engagement. He liked 'young Machell,' as he affected to call him when he was ill-tempered, well enough for his own sake—better by far because he was Hilda's brother—but he did not rejoice in him as Muriel's future husband, the man who would stand between him and his sister for ever, who had already deposed him and was still more thoroughly to dispossess him.

Wherefore, actuated by all these feelings and for the moment entirely unamiable, it was not to be wondered at that he received the handsome young officer as stiffly as if he had been an envoy from an enemy's country, and even forbore to conciliate Hilda's brother in his desire to show his displeasure to his sister's lover.

He might have spared himself the trouble of putting on his little airs of an offended prince annoyed with bold rebels. Arthur was too much in love to see what passed about him outside that love, and Derwent's approbation or disapprobation had been taken into no more account than the chance of Mrs. Smith refusing to consent to the engagement, and affected him as little as if Brian had barked unpleasantly. But Muriel saw it all, and for the first time in her life wished that her brother would leave her to herself. His presence, usually both pleasant and helpful, now troubled and embarrassed her, and his evident ill-humour made everything more *difficult* than need have been. And a girl's first meeting with

her lover after confession of her love is difficult enough at the best. It scarcely need be made more so by unnecessary additions.

Bashful and oppressed, loving and glad and shy, it would have been hard for Muriel to have defined her own state at this moment. Her lips smiled, but they quivered as much as they smiled; her eyes were soft and dewy, full of tender, pure, and maidenly love, but they looked only once at Arthur, then turned anxiously to her brother, and then to the ground, with something almost like tears in them. Her heart beat with that strange force which takes all strength from the body; her colour went and came like the sunlight flickering through the flying clouds of an April sky; she was humbled with the shame of her love, but made proud by its glory; longing for Arthur to show how much she loved him, but fearing to show that love by any overt sign of word or deed. It was all confusion and unrest, in the midst of happiness; and her face betrayed the turmoil of her heart.

‘Are you tired this morning?’ was Arthur’s rather trivial question, as he held her hand and looked at her with that tender, smiling, yet lordly look of a strong man come to claim in the sunshine the confirmation of a woman’s love confessed in the moonlight.

‘No,’ she stammered.

‘Why should she be tired?—we were not late, and I took care that she did not dance too much,’ said Derwent with his commanding air.

‘A ball is always fatiguing more or less,’ said Arthur, without knowing too well what he ought to say, still holding Muriel’s hand, and looking into her eyes with frank and undisguised delight, but at the same time dimly conscious that Derwent was unpleasant and that his presence there at all was an unmitigated nuisance. ‘However, I am glad to see you look so well this morning,’ he added, with the wonderful fatuity of a lover; and Muriel smiled, and, fatuous too for her own part, thought it so chivalrous and dear and tender that he should say so!

‘We had a surprise last night when we came home,’ she said, after a rather long pause, the three walking slowly up the lawn. The silence was becoming painful, and the woman is generally the first to break it when painful.

‘Yes! what was it?’ he asked.

Derwent broke off the hanging branch of a barberry tree with a nervous almost vicious movement.

‘We found papa at home,’ she said.

‘Your father!’

Arthur was a little disturbed at this; not because he had any

reason to doubt or dislike Muriel's father. On the contrary, he felt grateful to him for his gift of this precious life to the world and him; but it disturbed the arrangement of his ideas, altered the lines of his relations with the family as at present laid, and altogether was a break in the existing order of things—and a break of any kind in the first days of a man's love is uncomfortable.

'You did not expect him, I suppose, as you said nothing of his return to me last night?' he continued.

Derwent winced. It was the traditional gall and wormwood to him that any man should give himself the right to speak to Muriel as if their affairs were identical—a joint-stock concern in which he had a claim to be included.

'No, we knew nothing of it,' she said. 'Only when we came home we found papa. Such a surprise!' she repeated.

Her brains were in no better working order than Arthur's, and she found repetition more convenient than a new idea.

'And you were overjoyed?' said Arthur, not quite so much like a radiant Apollo as before.

'Yes,' answered Muriel tenderly.

'Of course we were glad to see my father,' said Derwent proudly.

It was as if Arthur had doubted, and had partly understood why; and he was eager to set him right and to vindicate and defend the father whom secretly he himself more than doubted. But what he did no other man should do.

'Should you have known him?' Arthur asked, rather to make conversation than because he was deeply interested in the personality of this unknown father. Save for Muriel indeed he would not have cared for Mrs. Smith's returned husband more than for the return, say, of Mrs. Rushton's.

'No, not in the least,' she answered. 'He has changed so much out in those hot countries! Besides, we were very young when he went away. I should have remembered him though had he been just the same—but fifteen years in Africa!'

She made a pretty little movement expressive of impossibility.

'Ah, then it is Africa where he has been travelling!' Arthur asked, with a little look of satisfaction that a local secret, which had been so long kept, was at last revealed. It was quite a harmless and natural look, but it offended Derwent and perplexed Muriel.

She turned to her brother.

'Yes, I believe so,' she answered with a slight hesitancy. For *after all*, asked point-blank yes or no, was she sure?—and could she *say yes*?

‘In what part of Africa was he?’ Arthur asked again.

‘I do not quite know,’ she answered, looking again at Derwent, who persistently refused to look at her. ‘We have been so often and for such a long time without letters from him, that it must have been somewhere in the interior; far away from any post or port.’

‘You did not know where your father was?’

Arthur said this with a very natural kind of surprise. This ignorance seemed odder than ever now that this apocryphal father of theirs had returned.

‘That was one of the unselfish traits of my mother’s character,’ put in Derwent stiffly. ‘She would never tell us when my father was in danger, but kept all the anxiety to herself.’

‘I dare say you would have been better pleased to have shared it,’ said Arthur pleasantly. ‘I should had I been in your place.’

‘My mother was the best judge,’ answered Derwent curtly.

‘You were older than your sister when he left home; should you have known him?’ Arthur asked.

‘No,’ said Derwent as shortly as before.

‘So!’ thought the lover, ‘the lieutenant does not quite approve of this return of his captain. He does not like being shelved.’

But he held his peace, and only laughed inwardly at the lad’s fretful temper and silly pride, though Muriel, for the sake of saying something, went on talking of her dear papa, and of how strange everything was to him, so long unaccustomed to civilised life as he had been; and how tired he was; and how odd it was to know that he was papa and yet to see him as a stranger; with a thousand other girlish reflections, partly to prevent that awkward silence, which was more embarrassing than anything else, from falling among them, and partly to enlist Arthur’s sympathy and forbearance from the first for the father whom she pitied—she scarcely knew why.

All this time they were strolling about the garden; Derwent still keeping close to Muriel who walked between the two young men with a feeling of division and adverse claims not specially consoling. If only that beloved brother of hers would go away! But it never occurred to him to leave her alone with Arthur. It would have seemed to him a very doubtful kind of thing in a protector, as he had always held himself to be; more especially as Arthur had as yet only ‘spoken,’ and they were not formally engaged; and that his sister should be uneasy and Arthur secretly disgusted, neither occurred to him as possible nor would have disturbed him had he thought of it, any more than his disapprobation disturbed Arthur. *He was simply doing his duty—on guard against possi-*

bilities which might attack his treasure; and who cares for censure when he knows that he is only doing as he ought?

After some time spent in this uncomfortable and indefinite manner, wandering without aim through the shrubby paths and without object across the lawn, Arthur turned suddenly to Muriel, and taking her hand drew it within his arm.

‘May I see your mother?’ he said. ‘And may I see her alone?’

It was Muriel’s turn to flush now; Derwent’s to turn pale, to bite his inner lip, to toss up his hair, and to look even more than ever like a young prince by turns aggrieved and offended.

‘Can my mother see you to-day?’ he asked with a vague feeling of putting some kind of obstacle in the way of this unwelcome affair; no matter what—the readiest to hand the best.

‘I hope so,’ said Arthur steadily; and Muriel turning to her brother, but not looking at him, echoed as steadily: ‘I should think so.’

There are certain things in life which make brave men wince; and the formal demand of the daughter’s hand from the parent is one of them. The offer is bad enough; but that terrible act of asking papa, of propitiating mamma, is ten times worse. And so Arthur found it now. He would rather have braved personal peril than this ordeal; for all that he anticipated no kind of difficulty, but imagined that his way was easy before him and that he had but to walk over the course at his own pace. He soon became conscious however that things were not going to be so easy as he imagined. Mrs. Smith was cold, curt, unhelpful; she would not give him a lead anyhow, but left him to find his own way as he best could through the chilling reserve and evident preoccupation of her manner; preoccupation perhaps a little too exaggerated, as if she wished the young fellow to see that his ardour was mistimed, his action unwelcome, and that, in the midst of the more important events of the hour, the marrying and settlement for life of an only daughter counted for nothing.

At last he did bring her to the point, with a burst, and asked her in so many words for what was to him the priceless gift of Muriel’s hand. He spoke of his devotion, his love, and how his life would be wrecked without her—all his good gifts of health and strength, of power of brain and social standing lost for ever to himself and the world if he could not marry that one special woman. He spoke of his earnest and passionate affection, so sincere now, so sure to last for all time—never to pass from her by that terrible way of satiety and habit—never to be given to some newer

fancy, never! never! He spoke of his intention to make her as happy as the angels in heaven, if the purest love and the most unselfish care can make a woman happy; in short, he went through the whole litany of lovers—that litany which all repeat *pro formâ* when they have their object to gain, but which it is a simple matter of chance if they keep when they have gained it.

Mrs. Smith's delicate face scarcely changed as the young man went on. It did certainly grow even whiter than before, and her lips closed into a somewhat thinner line; else she looked much the same as usual; statuesque and undemonstrative—a very lovely but immovable Fate, whose decision no anguish and no prayers of men could shake.

When he had finished he took her hand in both of his, his flushed and handsome face quivering with emotion as he looked earnestly into hers—hers which was at this moment the face of his assessor, the one who was to apportion to him life or death, blessedness or despair. And then and then only she gave some sign of feeling. The blood flew across her cheeks and forehead, her eyes filled with tears, her lips parted and trembled, her nostrils dilated, her bosom heaved, as she gave a little sob and pressed Arthur's hand with a quick convulsive grasp. But the momentary emotion passed as it had come; and she was once more the Mrs. Smith of Owlett—reserved, silent, unsympathetic, undemonstrative—as the world judged and knew her.

‘I can say nothing now,’ she said stonily, though she had to fetch her breath by one or two deep and laboured inspirations. ‘My husband's return has taken all out of my hands. He is henceforth the master.’

‘Let me see Mr. Smith,’ said Arthur.

She raised her eyes as if in wonder at such a request.

‘Certainly not yet,’ she answered. ‘He is fatigued with his journey, and I would not disturb him now. Besides, he knows nothing of the neighbourhood; he does not know one name from the other.’

‘Ours may easily be learnt,’ interrupted Arthur Machell a little proudly.

‘Yes, he will soon know all about you of course,’ she returned. ‘But he naturally wishes to have his home and children to himself for a while. Think how long he has been without them.’

‘But I am not asking to marry Muriel next week,’ said Arthur, smiling but impatient too. ‘He will have her with him all the same, whether engaged to me or not.’

‘No; it would make all the difference to him,’ she answered. ‘To make him feel that she is uncertain—already promised to some one

else—that he is not the first in her affections, as he ought to be, but that she is preoccupied and so far taken away from him—to meet him so suddenly with a proposal of marriage as the first event on his return—no, I could not, Mr. Machell. We must leave it for a while. Not yet—some future time.’

She spoke quickly and with an odd kind of suppressed emotion. Her love for her husband was evidently very deep when she could postpone the consolidation of her daughter’s vital happiness merely on the plea of a sentimental loss, a shadowy grievance to him. It was deep and true and womanly; but was it just to those whom she caused to suffer for it? If wifely, was she maternal? This was the thought that came into Arthur’s mind, and checked what would have been his admiration, his enthusiasm for her devotion.

‘You love your husband’ so much as this,’ he said a little reproachfully, emphasising the pronouns. ‘Cannot you feel then for me—for Muriel—who also love each other?’

‘What I may or may not feel for you has nothing to do with it,’ she answered, turning away her head.

She did not wish him to read her face. She feared that it might show how she was tortured at this moment—the faithful wife who had consecrated herself to the restoration of her husband’s happiness—the loving mother, who would have given her own life for her daughter, but who, forced by inexorable circumstances, was prepared to take that daughter’s heart as a sacrifice to her husband’s peace.

‘What you feel is the whole thing,’ urged Arthur. ‘You are absolute in the family. Your husband would naturally be guided by you, and if you would give your consent nothing more need be said. His would come with it.’

‘I cannot say anything yet,’ said Mrs. Smith, a little more softly than she had spoken before. ‘You must wait.’

‘I must wait in any case,’ he answered. ‘I have no end of arrangements to make; and it is only whether I shall make them, sure of the result—sure of my happiness—or whether I shall be hampered by doubt, uncertain of some things if sure of others.’

‘What arrangements?’ she asked.

‘I shall leave the army and enter on a new career altogether,’ he said.

She caught at the admission.

‘I do not choose to promise my daughter to anything so vague as this,’ she cried, looking him full in the eyes with an unspeakable expression of relief in her own, in that she had at last found a solid foothold, a tangible objection.

‘I think she would be safe in my hands,’ he answered proudly. ‘I have friends and energy; there is not much doubt of my making a career which she may well share. I should not ask her to accept any conditions which were beneath her.’

‘Doubtless you believe all this of yourself,’ she said, ‘and I dare say you will succeed; but you can easily understand that no mother who consulted the best interests of her daughter could promise her to a man who was on the point of breaking with his present profession before having entered on a new one.’

‘You would be right if I were unknown to you—practically an adventurer, without the guarantee of friends or status; but your objections cannot possibly apply to me. They are in the air, Mrs. Smith, and you must feel them to be so.’

He spoke with dignity, the Machell blood in him protesting against the position to which Muriel’s mother sought to relegate him; asserting his claim to be accepted as one of those for whom Fortune has no blanks in the lottery of life, and whose wrestlings with Fate include no chance of falls.

‘Still I must insist on something more definite,’ said Mrs. Smith uneasily.

‘Then do I understand that you do not sanction my engagement with your daughter?—that, if she holds by me, it will be against your will?’

His voice trembled as he spoke and his face was deadly pale; but his attitude was calm and even proud as, rising from his seat, he stood towering above this unsolved enigma, this living sphinx of Owlett, who sat as if carved out of stone, save for a certain nameless distress on her face which all her power of self-control could not wholly conceal.

‘I say nothing definite,’ she answered, nervously plucking at the border of her handkerchief. ‘It is all too sudden and precipitate. Sir Gilbert and Lady Machell must consent before anything can be arranged; for it is a bad marriage on either side. My daughter has no fortune, and you have to make your career. Her father has just come home, and your mother has not yet been consulted. Her consent is absolutely necessary; I could not allow my daughter to enter your family without it. It cannot be yet. You must wait.’

She spoke in a strange, jerky, incoherent manner, as if she were afraid of herself and putting some strong kind of control over her emotions; but she spoke firmly too, and Arthur recognised that further pleading was in vain—a mere waste of time and strength. She was fixed and impregnable in that one stronghold, ‘Not yet!’ What she suffered, what she wished for her own part

had nothing to do with it. She had other duties than those of a mother solicitous for her daughter's happiness, other things to remember and to provide for; and whether her own heart bled or not was a matter which influenced her in no wise. She had her work to do, her sorrow to fulfil; and she shrank from nothing that might meet her on the way marked out for her weary but so patient and so steadfast walking.

The interview must then come to an end, if a little abruptly at the last. Arthur told her distinctly enough that he would not give up Muriel, and that he would hold her to her promise, which also he believed she would be willing to keep. If he could not claim her now, he would when she was of age, he said, and when she might—and indeed must—choose between her family and himself.

‘For myself, I would give up father and mother and my whole family for her,’ he cried passionately. ‘And I do not believe that she loves me less than I love her.’

‘No marriage should include such sacrifice,’ said Mrs. Smith in a low voice. ‘There should be no question of giving up the world, of going against the family, on either side. If there are circumstances which make it this matter of choice and of division, it is better to abandon it at once. It can never be happy.’

‘I should be happy with your daughter if I lost the whole world beside,’ said Arthur, in the same passionate voice and manner as before; ‘and it would be the world well lost to gain her.’

A spasm crossed Mrs. Smith's face.

‘Ah!’ she said with uncontrollable agitation; ‘you do not know what that includes! And yet it is the best thing,’ she half whispered; ‘in the face of all, love is the best!’

‘Now I have your consent!’ cried Arthur, taking both her hands almost by force.

Again she looked into his face as she had looked before, her eyes full of tears, her lips parted, pitiful, soft. In another instant it seemed as if she would have abandoned herself to his entreaty, as if she would have given the consent that he implored. But the softness of the moment passed, as it had passed before; and again she stiffened, chilled, hardened into the Mrs. Smith of ordinary life and habits.

‘No,’ she said coldly. ‘I do not consent to Muriel's engagement with you. It is better for all that it should not be.’

It was not a pleasant hour for Arthur, still less for Muriel, when he went to find her in the garden, to tell her that her mother *refused* her sanction to their engagement, though unable to give *any good or sufficing* reason why; and that if they held together



DO NOT FAIL ME, MURIEL?



—not that he put it hypothetically, but very positively, as their holding together—it must be in direct opposition to her wishes (Lady Machell was out of court for the present) and on their own responsibility.

‘But you will not fail me, Muriel?’ he said, looking at her anxiously, his face, which had been so bright and confident when he first came up the drive, now pale and harassed, and if as resolute as before, yet suffering and depressed.

‘No, I will not fail you,’ she answered with something of her mother’s quiet strength.

‘No one will make you break your word?’

‘No one,’ she said.

‘They will all try, Muriel; I shall have to trust only to your faith, to your promise.’

‘And to my love,’ said Muriel, raising her eyes to his—those steadfast, soft, and candid eyes, with the love of her heart shining through them like an inner light.

There was no hesitation about her now, no girlish shame or pretty bashfulness. It was no longer the maiden’s timidity that held her, but the woman’s religiousness of love that moved her, the future wife’s calm constancy and faithful truth that inspired her.

He took her hands in his, and kissed them tenderly.

‘I can trust you?’ he said in a low voice.

‘Yes,’ she said; ‘you may.’

Just then Derwent, who had left his sister because unable to bear the sight of Arthur’s triumph, came wandering back, too jealous to keep away if also too jealous to bear his part with sympathy or resignation. He saw by the eyes, the attitude, the manner of each, that here was none of the happiness of love, if all of its strength, its determination, its openness of confession.

Neither he nor they spoke as he came up; and for the briefest possible instant he was glad that this affair of theirs was perhaps at an end, and that Muriel would be once more his and his only—his sister, no other man’s lover—and devoted to him as of old. Then his nobler nature prevailed, and, ashamed of that momentary baseness, he bent over his sister and kissed her forehead, at the same time laying his hand on Arthur’s shoulder.

‘I see that something is troubling you,’ he said. ‘What is it? What answer did my mother make?’

‘No,’ said Arthur shortly.

He threw up his head.

‘She did not consent?’ he cried. ‘She will not allow the engagement? Preposterous! Unheard of! Never mind, Arthur, nor

you, Muriel; she *shall* consent. You may trust me. If you love each other, you shall be married when you wish; and both my father and my mother shall consent.'

'Darling Derwent!' cried Muriel, turning her face to his shoulder and bursting into tears.

'You are a good old fellow! Thanks for your sympathy,' was Arthur's less enthusiastic rejoinder. But he was glad that the boy had come to his senses. He thought it would make everything easier, and Muriel so much happier.

(*To be continued.*)

The Swing.

Now in the sun and now in the shade,
Floats fair Adelaide, smiling and swinging;
While we lie in the cool green glade,
Filling the air with our laughter ringing.

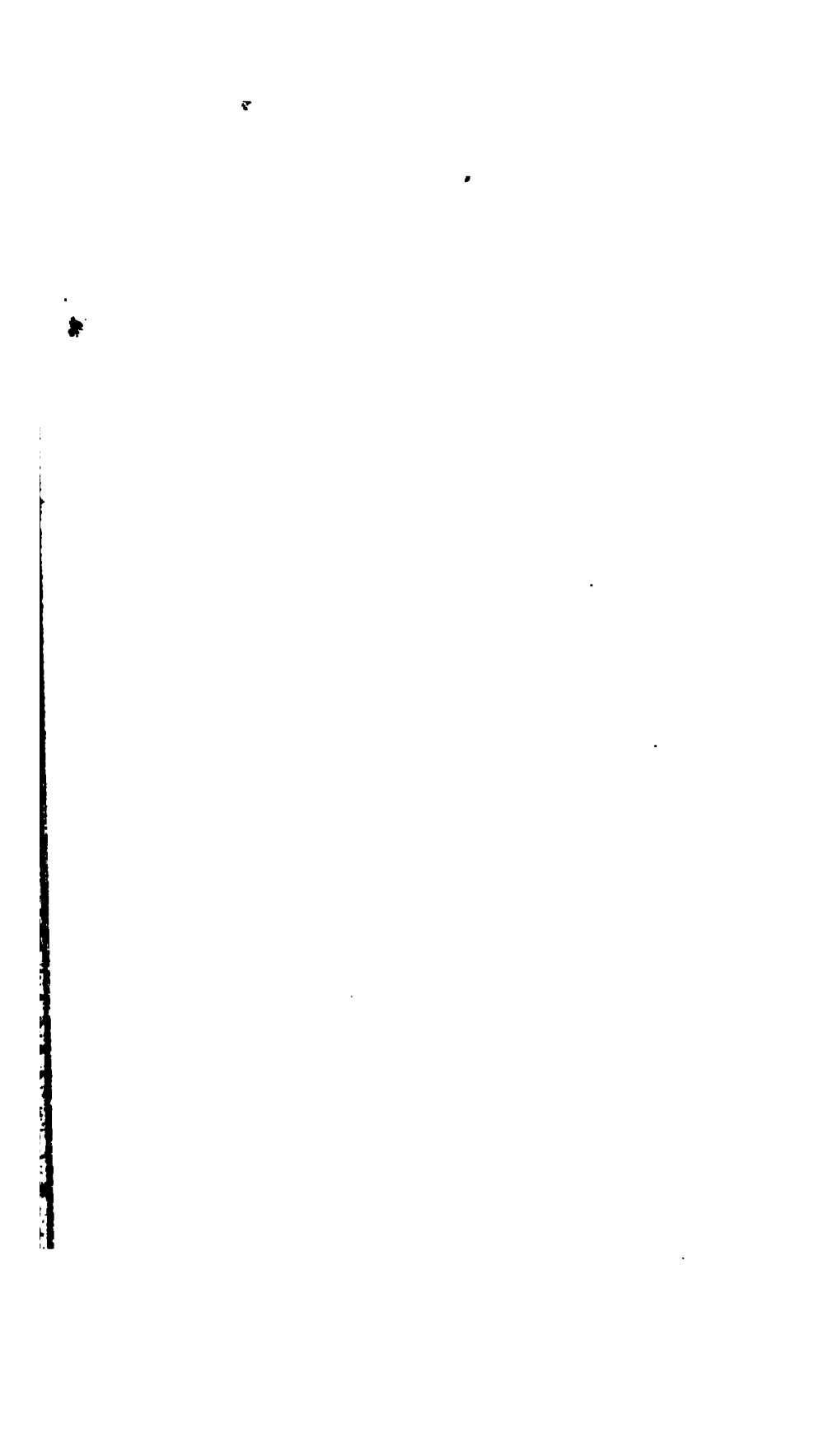
Up in the sky and down to the earth,
Backward and forward the swing is glancing;
All is sunshine and joy and mirth,
While gaily the rosy hours are dancing.

Ah, fair Adelaide, so in life,
Up and down and from joy to sorrow;
The world looks on with envy rife,
Nor dreams that the swing may break to-morrow.

From life to death the pendulum swings,
Time with his scythe the flowerets mowing;
Enjoy the day while youth's laughter rings,
And be gay while yet the swing is going.



THE SWING.



The Italian Opera in England.

BY H. BARTON BAKER.

THE first musical drama wholly performed after the Italian style, with recitatives and airs, in this country was ‘Arsinoë, Queen of Cypress,’ translated from an Italian opera of the same title, and produced at Drury Lane in 1705. In the following year Sir John Vanbrugh’s great house, which stood upon the same site as that now occupied by Her Majesty’s, and which was then called the Queen’s Theatre, was opened with another translated opera entitled ‘The Triumph of Love,’ and from that period the history of Italian opera in England may be said to commence. The ludicrous incongruities presented by these entertainments have been felicitously hit off by Addison in the ‘Spectator.’ The Italians sang their parts in their own language and the English in theirs. The hero addressed his slaves in Italian, but they answered him in English, while the lover made court to his mistress in a tongue of which she knew not a word. Such absurdities could not long continue, and in 1710 we find operas given wholly in Italian, and the dual language for ever abolished.

That same year was rendered remarkable in the musical annals of this country by the arrival of Handel. He was chapel-master at Hanover to George I., and had been invited over here by some English noblemen. Aaron Hill was then director of the Queen’s Theatre, and at once engaged him to write an opera, the subject, taken from ‘Tasso,’ being supplied by himself; and on February 24, 1711, Handel’s first operatic work, and many say his best, ‘Rinaldo,’ was produced and ran fifteen nights. Whatever might have been its merits it was a great advance upon all that had gone before, which Dr. Burney says, in his ‘History of Music,’ ‘were neither dramatic, passionate, pathetic, nor graceful. The first violin accompaniment was printed over the voice part, and if the words indicated sorrow it was marked *slow*, if they implied pleasure they were marked *quick*.’

Handel composed no fewer than thirty-five Italian operas, some of the airs from which he afterwards introduced into his oratorios. ‘Whatever pleasure,’ says Mr. Hogarth, in his ‘Memoirs of the Opera,’ ‘they must have given to the audiences of that age, they would fail to do so now; and, indeed, their performance would be impracticable. The music was written for a class of voices which

no longer exists,¹ and for these no performers could now be found. A series of recitatives and airs, with only an occasional duet, and a concluding chorus of the slightest kind, would appear meagre and dull to ears accustomed to the brilliant concerted pieces and finales of the modern stage; and Handel's accompaniments would appear thin and poor amidst the richness and variety of the modern orchestra.' In 1785, when the celebrated Madame Mara made her first appearance at the King's Theatre, Handel's operas were already regarded as old-fashioned and out of date.

About the same time as '*Rinaldo*' an opera by Gasparini, founded upon Shakespeare's '*Hamlet*,' and entitled '*Ambletto*,' was brought out, the overture of which must have been strangely remarkable for such a subject, consisting, as it did, of four movements closing with a *jig*! Handel's most formidable rival was Buononcini, whose first opera, '*Astarte*,' was produced in 1720. He pretty equally divided the town with the German master, although he was infinitely inferior to him. Swift has immortalised the Italian in his witty epigram:

Some say that Signor Bononcini
Compared to Handel's a mere ninny;
While others say that to him Handel
Is hardly fit to hold a candle.
Strange, that such difference should be
'Twixt tweedle-dum and tweedle-dee!

The Duchess of Marlborough, however, thought so much of Buononcini's talents, that she settled 500*l.* a year upon him.

In the year 1720 a Royal Academy of Music was established at the, now, King's Theatre, and inaugurated by a new opera entitled '*Muszo Scevola*.' The affair was a terrible failure, 15,000*l.* was lost by the end of the year, and subscribers were so backward in paying up, that legal proceedings were threatened against them in the public papers. This brought about a new mode of subscription, which, with certain modifications, has continued to the present day. Tickets were issued for a season of fifty nights on payment of ten guineas down, an engagement to pay five more on February 1, and the remaining five on May 1. Within seven years the whole of the capital, 50,000*l.*, was lost, and the Academy closed its existence in 1728.

Our first *prime donne* were Mrs. Tofts, an Englishwoman, and Margarita de l'Épine, an Italian. Cibber highly eulogises the former for the beauty of her person and 'the exquisitely sweet

¹ The male soprano, the product of the refusal of the Popes to permit women singing in churches. The prohibition was removed by Clement XIV. in 1769; he also recommended that female vocalists should be employed in the theatres.

and silver tones of her voice.' But the great attraction of the opera in its early days was the male sopranist, who combined the positions of the modern tenor and prima donna. The first of these were Valentini and Nicolini; the excellence of the latter even wrung praises from such an enemy to Italian opera as Addison. But the fame of both was completely eclipsed upon the appearance in 1734 of the marvellous Farinelli. Dr. Burney says that, without the assistance of gesture or graceful attitude, he astonished and enchanted his hearers by the force, extent, and mellifluous tones of his voice, even when he had nothing to execute or express. No intervals were too close, too wide, too rapid for his execution. Composers were unable to write passages difficult enough to display the full extent of his powers. On his arrival in England, at a private rehearsal given in the apartments of Cuzzoni (the prima donna), the manager of the opera observed that the band did not follow him, but were all gaping with wonder. He desired them to be attentive, but they confessed they were unable to keep pace with the singer, and were not only disabled but overwhelmed by his talents. He could hold on and swell a note to such a surpassing length that people could scarcely be persuaded but that it was continued by some hidden wind instrument while he took breath. He seems, however, to have been partly indebted for this power to the formation of his lungs, which were capable of holding an immense volume of air. His voice was said to have had the power of tranquillising the half-insane Ferdinand VI.; and an enthusiastic Englishwoman exclaimed blasphemously, after hearing him, 'One God, one Farinelli.'

A curious picture of the times is afforded by the rivalry of the two famous *prime donne*, Cuzzoni and Faustina, who then divided the favour of the town as Mrs. Tofts and Margarita de l'Épine had in former years. The factions were headed by two noble ladies, who from their opposite boxes led the hisses and more than once excited their followers to riot.

From the retirement of Handel from the operatic stage in 1740, to the first representation of Glück's 'Orfeo' in 1770, the art of composition seems to have made little advance; but in that great work it took an enormous stride. Nineteen years later, Sir John Vanbrugh's theatre was burned down—by incendiarism it was supposed—and the company migrated to the Pantheon. Two years afterwards that building also fell a prey to the flames, not before, however, 30,000*l.* had been lost in the speculation.

With the opening of the new King's Theatre in 1793 commences the history of the modern opera. Let us pause for a moment, and, turning to the pages of Lord Mount Edgcumbe's 'Musical Remi-

niscences,' steal a picture of the old and new house, and of the old and new *régime*. Writing of the former he says: 'The boxes were then much larger and more commodious than they are now . . . The front was then occupied by open public boxes, or an amphitheatre (as it is called in French theatres), communicating with the pit. Both of these were filled exclusively with the highest classes of society, all, without exception, in full dress, then universally worn. The audiences thus assembled were considered as indisputably presenting a finer spectacle than any other theatre in Europe, and absolutely astonished the foreign performers, to whom such a sight was entirely new. At the end of the performance the company of the pit and boxes repaired to the coffee-room, which was then the best assembly in London, private ones being rarely given on opera nights; and all the first society was regularly to be seen there. Over the front box was the five-shilling gallery, then resorted to by respectable persons not in full dress; and above that an upper gallery, to which the admission was three shillings. Subsequently the house was encircled with private boxes, yet still the prices remained the same, and the pit preserved its respectability, and even grandeur, till the old house was burned down in 1789.'

'Formerly,' he continues, 'every lady possessing an opera box considered it as much her home as her house, and was as sure to be found there, few missing any of the performances. If prevented from going, the *loan* of her box and the gratuitous use of the tickets was a favour always cheerfully offered and thankfully received, as a matter of course, without any idea of payment. Then, too, it was a favour to ask gentlemen to belong to a box, when subscribing to one was actually advantageous. Now no lady can propose to them to give her more than double the price of admission at the door, so that, having paid so exorbitantly, everyone is glad to be reimbursed at least a part of the great expense which she must often support alone. Boxes and tickets are therefore no longer given, they are let for what can be got; for which traffic the circulating libraries afford an easy accommodation. Many, too, which are not taken for the season, are disposed of in the same manner, and are almost put up to auction, their price varying from three to eight or even ten guineas, according to the performance of the evening or other accidental circumstances.'¹

The great *prime donne* of the first twelve years of the new house were Mara, Banti, Grassini, and Mrs. Billington; the tenor was Braham,—all admirable artists. Lord Mount Edgumbe, an unexceptionable judge, pronounces Banti to have been the most

¹ The 'Reminiscences' were published in 1826, but these remarks still hold good.

'delightful singer' he ever heard. She died at Bologna in 1806, and left her larynx, which was of extraordinary size, to be preserved in a bottle in the museum of that town. Mrs. Billington was a beautiful singer, but an indifferent actress. She had received a careful training in Italy, and her vocal powers were greatly appreciated there. Once, however, she nearly fell a victim to the superstition of the people. While singing at Naples an eruption of Vesuvius burst forth; the Neapolitans, thinking it a judgment upon them for countenancing an English heretic, were about to spring upon the stage and seize her, when fortunately the eruption ceased and their fury melted into enthusiastic applause.

Mara retired in 1794; Banti, as we have seen, died in 1806; and the same year witnessed the last appearance of Grassini in England and the retirement of Mrs. Billington. The last-named lady took Mozart's '*Clemenza di Tito*' for her benefit. It was the first time the great composer's music was heard in London. The principal parts were sung by the *bénéficiaire* and Braham. But the Italian part of the company neither understood nor relished the music, one of the concerted pieces being more difficult to study than half a dozen whole operas of the Italian school. So after a few repetitions this fine opera was laid aside and neglected. It had been produced by the suggestion of the Prince of Wales, who seems to have been the only person at that time capable of appreciating Mozart's genius, and the score was supplied from his own library. That same season Braham quitted the Italian stage and devoted himself entirely to English music. Thus the four constellations of the Opera House disappeared almost simultaneously. It was, however, in the year 1806 that Madame Catalani, who had already won golden opinions on the Continent, first appeared in London. Passing through Paris on her way to England, she sang before the Emperor, who was greatly delighted with her. 'Where are you going,' he demanded, 'that you wish to leave Paris?' 'To London, sire,' she replied. 'You must remain in Paris,' was the peremptory rejoinder. 'You will be well paid and your talents better appreciated here; 10,000 francs a year, two months' leave of absence. That is settled. Adieu.' The lady, however, contrived to escape across the Channel, and to fulfil her engagement. Her terms were 2,000 guineas for the season. But the next year she increased them to 5,000 guineas. The manager objected that it left him nothing for his other artists. 'What do you want else when you have my wife's talent?' demanded her husband, Valabreque; 'she and four or five puppets (*poupées*) are enough.' And that was all the public

got, and for a time it sufficed to crowd the theatre. Finally, her terms became so enormous that managers, especially when the public began to grow tired of 'the four or five puppets,' even with Madame, feared to incur the responsibility of engaging her. She left the King's Theatre in 1813, and after that was heard chiefly in concerts. She gained by these entertainments in one season of four months, in London, 10,000*l.*, and doubled that sum in a tour through the English provinces, Scotland, and Ireland.

Catalani herself seems to have been a simple-minded, good-natured creature, and more than one story is told of her charitable disposition. But her husband was a low-bred, avaricious fellow. He called her his *poule d'or*, which she certainly was to him. Captain Gronow relates in his 'Reminiscences' that when she was on a visit at Stowe he sent in a bill to the Marquis of Buckingham for seventeen hundred pounds for seventeen songs his wife had sung in company, although she was on the footing of a guest. But Valabreque was usually left behind when she was invited to distinguished houses. She is described by contemporaries as being very beautiful, not a great actress, but making up for all deficiencies by the charm of her manner. Her voice, Captain Gronow says, 'was transcendent.' But she appears to have preferred to astonish her audience by extraordinary feats of execution, such as leaping two octaves at once, and the most florid *fioriture*, rather than pleasing them by purity of style. These faults, as an inevitable consequence, increased with time. One of her favourite feats was to sing the 'Non più andrai' of 'Figaro,' and by mere force of lungs and volume of voice rise above all the brass of the orchestra. Her last appearance in opera took place in 1824, in Mayer's 'Il Fanatico per la Musica,' but she cut out everything that did not tend to the display of her *bravura* powers, and walked through the part without condescending to act. Each night the audience grew thinner, until she withdrew from the theatre never again to appear upon the stage. Her last appearance in public took place in Dublin in 1828. The following anecdote, taken from Mr. Hogarth's book, is a capital illustration of her simplicity and her intellectual calibre.

When she visited the court of Weimar she was placed next to Goethe at dinner, but without having been previously introduced to him. Struck by his appearance, she inquired his name of the gentleman on the other side. 'The celebrated Goethe, madame,' was the reply. 'On what instrument does he play?' 'He is not a musician, madame, he is the renowned author of "Werter."' 'Oh, yes, I remember!' cried Catalani delightedly; and turning to the poet she exclaimed, 'Oh, sir, I am a great admirer of "Werter."'

I never read anything so laughable in all my life. What a capital farce it is, sir.' 'A farce, madame!' said the astonished Goethe. 'Oh, yes, and there never was anything so exquisitely ridiculous,' she answered, laughing heartily at the remembrance. She had seen a parody upon the 'Sorrows of Werter' at a Parisian minor theatre, and had never heard of the original.

In the mean time the commercial affairs of the King's Theatre were by no means prosperous. The new house opened under the management of Taylor, an eccentric gentleman, who had a great dislike to pay his debts, and who, during the greater part of the time he was director, was within the King's Bench or its 'rules.' 'How can you conduct the King's Theatre perpetually in durance as you are?' remarked a friend. 'My dear fellow,' replied the manager, 'how could I possibly conduct it if I were at liberty? I should be eaten up, sir, devoured. Here comes a dancer, "Mr. Taylor, I want such a dress;" another, "I want such and such ornaments." One singer demands to sing a part different from the one allotted to him, another to have an addition to his appointments. No; let me be shut up, and then they go to my secretary; he, they know, cannot go beyond his line; but if they get at *me*—pshaw! no man at large can manage that theatre; and in faith no man who undertakes it ought to go at large.'

Taylor had a partner named Waters, between him and whom, as affairs went from bad to worse, there were continual disagreements. At length the theatre closed. Waters tried to get possession, but Taylor's people resisted. Free fights were of constant occurrence, until the former at length succeeded in forcing an entrance. This was in 1814. Waters carried on the management until 1820, when, overwhelmed with debt, he was compelled to retire. The theatre was then taken by Mr. Ebers, a bookseller, who gave to the world his experiences of management in a volume entitled 'Seven Years of the King's Theatre.' During that period he never lost a less sum than 3,000*l.* in a season, frequently considerably more. Thus from its establishment in this country we find that Italian opera, spite of the fashionable patronage which had always been accorded it, had been not only an unprofitable but a ruinous speculation to all who had undertaken it. In 1818 the auditorium of the King's Theatre was reconstructed and modelled into the form in which we all remember it. The shape was horse-shoe; in dimensions it was within a few feet of La Scala. Its length from the curtain to the back of the boxes was 102 feet; the extreme width 75 feet; the stage was 60 feet long and 80 wide. The subscription to the new theatre was raised to sixty representations, and the charge to 30

guineas a seat. But during Catalani's engagement the price of a box to hold six was advanced from 180 guineas to 300.

Although the first two decades of the century were not remarkable for great singers, they were peculiarly rich in great works. Catalani introduced Mozart's '*Nozze di Figaro*,' being herself the original Susanna in London. In 1811 the immortal composer's '*Così fan tutte*' was heard for the first time, and received with unbounded delight. '*Il Flauto Magico*' followed, but the company was inadequate to the interpretation of this difficult work and it failed. The year one thousand eight hundred and seventeen should be marked with a red letter in operatic annals, since it witnessed the production of the greatest of all operas, the incomparable '*Don Giovanni*,' brought out in opposition to a strong cabal and immense difficulties. Its success was triumphant. It was played twenty-three nights to overwhelming houses, and restored the exhausted treasury to a flourishing condition. The original cast embraced Madame Camporese, Madame Fodor, Signors Crivelli, Ambrogetti, Naldi, and Agrisani. In the same year Madame Pasta, then a mere girl no older than the century, made her *début*, but seems to have given little indication of her future pre-eminent genius, and created no attention. With the appearance of Signor Garcia in 1818 began the reign of Rossini, he introducing the '*Barbiere*,' the first opera of that composer heard in England. So great became the rage for these works that from 1821 to 1828 fourteen out of a repertory of thirty-four operas represented were his; Mozart was next. Rossini came to London in 1824 to conduct his opera of '*Zelmira*.' Madame Rossini, a singer of great eminence in Italy, sustained the principal part; but, although she was still beautiful in person and grand in style, she was *passée*, and was coldly received. It was her last appearance upon the stage.

In 1825 Velluti, the last of the male sopranos, appeared. Thirty years had elapsed since this voice had been heard by the English public. So strong were the prejudices entertained against the new singer, that it was only after much hesitation the management decided upon his appearance. Lord Mount Edgcumbe gives the following description of the event:—

'At the moment when he was expected to appear the most profound silence reigned in one of the most crowded audiences I ever saw, broken on his entering by loud applauses of encouragement. The first note he uttered gave a shock of surprise, almost of disgust, to inexperienced ears; but his performance was listened to with attention and great applause throughout, with but few audible expressions of disapprobation, speedily suppressed. The opera he

had chosen for his *début* was "Il Crociato in Egitto," by a German composer named Meyerbeer, till then totally unknown in this country. The music was quite of the new school, but not copied from its founder, Rossini; it was original, odd, flighty, and might even be termed fantastic.'

Might not this be the mild criticism of an old gentleman of the present day upon Wagner? His remarks upon Rossini's works, in which he complains of the sudden change of motives, the absence of airs and the noisy instrumentation, so different from the weak, melodious operas of his youth, are equally applicable. And yet the anti-Wagnerites urge the same complaints against the German maestro, and fall back upon Rossini and even Meyerbeer as representatives of the old school. Perhaps our sons in their old age will point to Wagner as conservative and classical, when some new musical prophet shall out-Wagner Wagner.

From 1824 to 1840 was the golden age of opera in this country; between those dates it attained a perfection, and was interpreted by artists, with which no other period can compare. Pasta reappeared in 1824 in the height of those marvellous powers which rendered her, perhaps, the greatest lyric artist the world has ever seen. 'Pasta,' says Mr. Hogarth, 'was what a musical performer ought to be, but is so very seldom—a complete impersonation of the character she assumed. We thought not of admiring the great vocalist; we even forgot that it was Pasta who stood before us while we were thrilled with horror by the frenzy of the desperate Medea or wept for the sorrows of the love-lorn Nina' (Paiesello's 'Nina'). After a long and, as it had been supposed, final retirement from the stage, she reappeared for one night in 1850 in selections from 'Anna Bullena.' The melancholy scene is admirably pictured by Mr. Chorley. Her toilet was neglected, her hair absurdly dressed, as, indeed, was her whole figure. Among the audience was Rachel, who cruelly and openly ridiculed the whole performance; and Madame Viardot, then in the height of her fame, came to hear Pasta for the first time. 'She attempted the final mad scene of the opera, the most complicated and brilliant among the mad scenes on the modern stage, an example of vocal display till then unparagoned. By that time, tired, unprepared, in ruin as she was, she had rallied a little. When, on Anne Boleyn's hearing the coronation music for her rival, the heroine searches for her own crown upon her brow, Madame Pasta wildly turned in the direction of the festive sounds, the old irresistible charm broke out; nay, even in the final song, with its roulades and its scales of shakes ascending by a semitone, the consummate vocalist and tragedian was able to combine form with meaning, the moment of the situation was indicated at

least to the younger artist. "You are right," was Madame Viardot's quick and heartfelt response (her eyes full of tears) to a friend beside her. "You are right. It is like the 'Cenacolo' of Da Vinci at Milan—a wreck of a picture, but the picture is the greatest in the world."

Sontag came to London in 1828, but her Berlin (she was a Prussian by birth) and Paris idolaters had aroused such marvellous expectations in the English public that she was a disappointment. Gradually, however, a reaction took place, and ere the season was over she had become an established favourite. Upon her marriage with Count Rossi, a Piedmontese noble, she retired from the stage. The revolution of 1848 stripping him of his possessions, she again resumed her art; reappeared at Her Majesty's, and during the seasons of 1849-50 was the great star. Her style, like Catalani's, was excessively florid; she excelled in light opera. The year after Sontag's *début* a far greater artiste made her bow before an English public—Madame Malibran, the original Amina in this country. Some one—Mr. Chorley, I think—has felicitously called her the Garrick of the Italian stage, to mark her great diversity of style as compared with Pasta, whom he calls the Siddons of opera. A romantic pathos hovers around the memory of this glorious artiste. Her history was a sad one: a harsh father (Garcia) in her childhood, an unhappy marriage with a man double her age in her girlhood, and then her early death at twenty-eight, just after she was united with De Beguis, the man of her choice. In private life she was as warm-hearted and generous as she was great in public.

'Boundless as were Malibran's resources, keen as was her intelligence, dazzling as was her genius, she never produced a single type in opera for other women to adopt. She passed over the stage like a meteor, as an apparition of wonder rather than as one who, on her departure, left her mantle behind for others to take up and wear.'

Each season now brought forth a new prodigy. In 1830 appeared Lablache, whose first part was Geronimo in 'Il Matrimonio Segreto.' 'Musical history,' says Mr. Chorley, 'contains no account of a bass singer so gifted by nature, so accomplished by art, so popular without measure or drawbacks, as Louis Lablache. His shoe was as big as a child's boat, one could have clad a child in one of his gloves,' and yet he goes on to say that so perfectly artistic was he in dress and bearing that the spectator was never shocked by his abnormal size. There are many laughable anecdotes told of his immensity; here is one.

'One winter's day, while in Paris, a violent shower of rain

obliged Lablache to seek refuge in the entrance of a passage, and soon afterwards a young *gamin* bethought him of the same shelter. To enter a passage, however, barricaded by a Lablache was no very easy matter, especially when the colossal basso had his elbows extended under an ample cloak, and swayed from one side of the passage to the other. The boy, tired of dodging the living gate, took hold of a corner of the giant's cloak, and pulling it lustily, cried, "Cordon, s'il vous plaît!" the expression used when the concierge is required to open the door. Lablache entered into the humour of the position, and, as he let the boy pass, imitated the motion of a door turning on its hinges.'

Rubini created an immense enthusiasm upon his appearance in 1831. The fascination of his voice was irresistible; even his brother artistes would linger at the wings while he was singing, loath to lose a single note. He made his *début* at the theatre of Romano, his native town, in a woman's part, when he was twelve years old. He was afterwards engaged to play the violin in the orchestra of the theatre at Bergamo and sing in the choruses. A drama was about to be produced into which a cavatina was to be introduced, but there was nobody to sing it. Rubini was mentioned, and a few shillings were offered him to undertake it. He accepted, and received great applause. Some time afterwards he was engaged as tenor at Pavia at thirty-six shillings a month. Sixteen years afterwards he and his wife were offered an engagement at 6,000*l*. But he always cherished that song which first brought him into public notice, and used to sing it when he was in the height of his reputation. The compass of his voice was marvellous; he could begin on the high B flat without preparation, and hold on it for a considerable time. At Milan the people flocked in crowds to hear this wonderful effect, and never failed to encore it. One night, raising his eyes to heaven, extending his arms, inflating his chest, and opening his mouth, he endeavoured as usual to give forth the wonderful note. But B flat would not come. Greatly disconcerted, the tenor brought all the force of his splendid lungs into play and gave it forth with immense vigour. But he could feel that he had in some way injured himself. He went through the performance, however, as brilliantly as ever. When it was over he sent for a surgeon, who very soon discovered that he had broken his collar-bone—it had been unable to resist the tension of his lungs. 'Can a man go on singing with a broken clavicle?' he inquired. 'Certainly,' replied the doctor; 'and if you take care not to lift any weight, you will experience no disagreeable effects.' And he did go on singing.

Tamburini appeared in 1832, Grisi in 1834, Persiani in 1838,

and Mario in 1839. Out of this combination was formed the world-famous 'Puritani' quartette, Rubini, Lablache, Tamburini, and Grisi; such a one had never before been approached upon the lyric stage, and probably never will be again. In 1842 a noble artiste burst upon the town, Miss Adelaide Kemble, the greatest English singer (though not the best of this century), says Mr. Chorley, 'a poetical and thoughtful artiste whose name will never be lost as long as the art of dramatic singing is spoken of.' He says that in 'Norma' she could compare with Pasta, and could be preferred (apart from voice and person) to Grisi. 'In comedy her Susanna and Caroline were good enough for any opera-house in Europe, no matter how high the standard.' Laurent and Laporte succeeded Mr. Ebers in the management of the opera. Under the directorship of the latter occurred the famous Tamburini 'row,' which may be regarded as the last of the theatrical riots. The favourite baritone had been superseded by an inferior artiste named Colletti, upon which his colleagues of the theatre organised a clique to compel his re-engagement, and enlisted upon their side the fashionable part of the audience. On Colletti's appearance he was saluted with a storm of hisses from the omnibus boxes, and shouts of 'Tamburini!' Laporte appeared, but could not make himself heard. At length the noble occupants of one of the boxes, headed by a Prince of the Blood, leaped upon the stage, the curtain fell, and the invaders, waving their hats, shouted 'Victory!' and Laporte was obliged to give way. The affair has been immortalised in one of the Ingoldsby ballads. The death of Laporte placed the theatre in 1842 under the direction of Mr. Lumley, who had been previously concerned in his management. The event of his first season was the *début* of Ronconi, who, in the greatness of his acting, rivalled even Lablache, and that with a voice limited in compass, inferior in quality, possessing little power of execution, a low stature, and commonplace features.

Early in 1846 there rose a rumour that a new opera was about to open at Covent Garden. It was laughed to scorn, pronounced an impossibility; and when at length the preparations for the event were forced upon everyone's attention, the sceptics held that it could never be accomplished, and that some unforeseen accident would certainly crush it in its birth. It nevertheless came to pass, and Grisi, Mario, Tamburini, and Costa went over to the new house. The opening opera was 'Semiramide,' superbly produced; this was followed by other great works both in that and the following season, mounted with a splendour and care such as had never yet been seen in the Haymarket. The old house was rapidly sinking before its young and energetic rival when Jenny Lind came to

the rescue. 'She had been long promised ; many difficulties intervened, all tending to increase the anticipations—for we had already run mad from reports—with which her appearance was looked forward to.'

'Rarely,' says Mr. Lumley, in his 'Reminiscences,' 'was ever seen such excitement at Her Majesty's Theatre. The crowd at the doors might have led to a suspicion of an *émeute* in a capital less orderly than London ; and the struggle for entrance was violent beyond precedent—so violent, indeed, that the phrase "a Jenny Lind crush" became a proverbial expression. Nor was this crowd the result of a hasty gathering. From an early hour in the afternoon the Haymarket became so thronged as to be impassable to pedestrians. As to the file of carriages, it seemed as interminable as it was dense.' Describing the performance, Mr. Chorley says : 'She appeared as Alice in 'Robert' (it was the first representation of Meyerbeer's opera in Italian in this country), an appearance not to be risked by any singer the least nervous. The girl, dragged hastily down the stage in the midst of a crowd, has at once, and when out of breath, to begin on an accented note, without time to think or look around her. I have never seen anyone so composed as Mdlle. Lind on that night. Though the thunder of welcome was loud and long enough to stop the orchestra and to bewilder a veteran, and though it was acknowledged with due modesty, her hands did not tremble—one even arranged a ring on the finger of the other—and her voice spoke out as firmly as if neither fear nor failure was possible. . . . The scenes of Alice, thoroughly well given and perfectly suited to the powers of their giver, were waited for, listened to in breathless silence, and received with applause which was neither encouragement, nor appreciation, nor enthusiasm, so much as idolatry. Woe to those during that season who ventured to say or to write that any other great singer had ever sung in the Haymarket's Opera House ! To my cost I know they were consigned to such ignominy as belongs to the idiotic slanderer. Old and seemingly solid friendships were broken, and for ever, in that year.'

In 1848 Sims Reeves made his first appearance at the Italian Opera as Carlo, in 'Linda di Chamouni,' and was received with enthusiasm, but, in consequence of a disagreement with the management, appeared but once. He reappeared the next season with Miss Catherine Hayes in 'Edgardo.' From 1852 until 1856 Her Majesty's was closed and Covent Garden was the sole Opera House in London. In that year it was burned to the ground, and the company migrated to the Lyceum. The old house once more reopened its doors, and fortune returned to it in the person of

Piccolomini, who for a time created a furore only second to that of Jenny Lind, and of Giuglini, the last of the great tenors.

Giuglini began his career in the choir of the Metropolitan Church at Fermo, and was destined for an ecclesiastical career. The beauty of his voice procured him many offers to appear upon the lyric stage, all of which he declined. Accident, however, accomplished what persuasion was powerless to do. A member of the orchestra of the Fermo Theatre falling ill, Giuglini took his place at a moment's notice; not long afterwards a similar mishap occurred to the tenor of the same theatre, and he was again requested to fill the vacant place, which he did with so much ability that he at once embraced the lyric profession.

The *début* of Titiens in 1858 roused a great excitement both out of doors and behind the scenes. Even the rehearsals became exciting events. 'As her powerful voice,' says Mr. Lumley, 'rang through the theatre and excited the plaudits of all present, so the latent fire of Giuglini became kindled in its turn, and, one artist vying with the other in power and passion of musical declamation, each rehearsal became a brilliant performance. Indeed, so strongly were both artistes and connoisseurs impressed with the merits of Mdlle. Titiens, that fears were expressed lest she should utterly "swamp" the favourite tenor. "He will never be able to come up to that powerful voice in the last act," said one. "She will utterly double up Giuglini," said another. I foresaw that their fears were idle, and the result proved I was right, for, in his personation of Raoul, Giuglini raised himself to the pinnacle of his profession.' The success was magnificent; the Queen was present, and, upon leaving her box, Her Majesty expressed her opinion to the impresario that 'It was beautiful.'

I have left myself no space to speak of the appearances of Mdlle. Nilsson or of Mdlle. Patti, but these are events well within the memory of even young opera-goers. The lyric as well as the dramatic art has fallen into mediocrity. The tenor—unless Signior Gayarré is destined to fill the long vacant place—and the basso are things of the past; two or three fine baritones remain to us; we have still Titiens, Nilsson, and Patti, and a young and noble artiste who has probably not yet attained to the height of her powers—Mdlle. Albani; but where are we to look for their successors—at least, of the first three? They seem as unlikely to be found as those of Kean and Macready.

Quips and Cranks at our Club Window.

BY AN OLD ENTHUSIAST AND A YOUNG CYNIC.

No. XXXI.—MIDGES IN THE SUNSHINE.

If I could see with a midge's eye,
 Or think with a midge's brain,
 I wonder what I'd say of the world,
 With all its joy and pain ?
 Would my seven brief hours of mortal life
 Seem long as seventy years,
 As I danced in the flickering sunshine
 Amid my tiny peers ?
 Should I feel the slightest hope or care
 For the midges yet to be ;
 Or think I died before my time,
 If I died at half-past three,
 Instead of living till set of sun
 On the breath of the summer wind ;
 Or deem that the world was made for me
 And all my little kind ?
 Perhaps if I did, I'd know as much
 Of Nature's mighty plan,
 And what it meant for good or ill,
 As that larger midge, a man !

No. XXXII.—FANCIES.

'WHENCE come your beautiful fancies ?
 From the earth or the heavens above ?'
 'From neither !' the poet replied, 'they stream
 From the eyes of the woman I love !
 There are far more thoughts in her sunny glance,
 Than stars in the midnight skies !'
 'You're a fool !' said his friend. 'Perhaps I am ;
 What's the good of being wise ?
 I would not change this folly of mine,
 No, not for an Empire's prize !'

No. XXXIII.—THE CONTENTED AUTHOR.

If the critics extol me, contented I am ;
 If the critics revile me, I care not a damn !

No. XXXIV.—THE BIRTHDAY.

My birthday ! why do you remind me ?
 I hate its oft-recurring chime ;
 It brings me nothing but sad remembrance,
 And makes me quarrel with poor old Time.
 My birthday ! gladly I'd forget it !
 I would be younger if I could !
 Alas ! alas ! the years are swindlers ;
 They make me old before I'm good.

No. XXXV.—WORK.

You say I overload my brain
 By stress of work, that's work in vain.
 You may be right, I think you're wrong,—
 Work's but a pleasure to the strong.
 Weary of walking, I can run,
 And make good end of well-begun ;
 I leave false history for romance,
 That's just as false, or true, perchance,
 And then I dive in the deep deep sea,
 And float in the billows of Poesy,—
 Changing the work, and working ever,
 But worn and weary, never ! never !

No. XXXVI.—WINE AND—WATER.

I.

As I sat a-drinking, a-drinking, a-drinking,
 A-drinking and bousing with jolly boys three,
 Out started an imp from the neck of the bottle,
 And leaped to the board 'twixt the goblet and me.
 Says he, ' You're not wise, sir,
 I'll be your adviser.
 To drink is a blunder, it reddens the nose,
 It fills up your dimples
 With blotches and pimples,
 And pours the hot gout like a tide to your toes.
 ' Who cares ? ' I said gaily,
 ' I drain my glass daily,
 And feel none the worse ; and I know, I suppose ? '

II.

Again I sat drinking, a-drinking, a-drinking,
 Drinking and bousing with jolly boys four,
 When out from the bottle there started a demon
 With eyes like live coals when the furnaces roar.

With gesture and antic,
 He screamed as if frantic,
 ' 'Tis poison you're drinking, the warm and the cool.
 Shall warning be vain, sir ?
 You're boiling your brain, sir !
 And burning your stomach, you idiot and fool !'
 I looked at him, smiling—
 ' Pray cease your reviling !
 I never get drunk,—moderation's my rule !'

III.

Once more I sat drinking, alone and contented,
 The clear crystal water that flowed from the well,
 When lo ! at my side stood a luminous angel
 With eyes full of love that no language can tell.
 She silently blessed me,
 Her wisdom possessed me,
 I felt I was true to the vow that I swore—
 I knew that no madness
 Would come of my gladness,
 But health and contentment in bountiful store.
 Oh, angel of beauty !
 Thy law is my duty !
 The bottle and I shall be friends nevermore !

No. XXXVII.—NOBODY CARES.

How the tide flows,
 How the wind blows,
 How the time goes,
 Nobody knows.
 And this is our life and all that it bears,
 Till death comes and snatches us up unawares,—
 Who would have thought it ? Nobody cares.

No. XXXVIII.—PRICES.

BEEF and bacon, bread and beer,
 Raiment, lodging, fire,
 All things that men most sorely need
 And painfully desire
 Mount up in price, from day to day,
 Higher and ever higher.
 Alas, for the honest worker
 With nought to sell but brain !
 Who wears it out by over-toil
 His poor dry bread to gain !

QUIPS AND CRANKS.

Work doesn't follow the price of beef;
 And if the wretch complain,
 Men answer, 'Nobody wants your work,
 Beggar! you've lived in vain!'

No. XXXIX.—GOING TO BED.

'One old man jumped overboard and said he was going to bed.'—*Narrative of the Loss of the Steamship 'Hibernia.'*

I'm faint and very weary,
 I've trouble in my head,
 I've something heavy on my heart,
 And I'd like to go to bed,
 To sleep on a soft soft pillow
 Well wrapped from the gusty cold
 And the winds of frosty fortune
 That pinch me uncontrolled.

I think I'll go to sleep—
 One jump—and all is done!
 And I'll never know grief again
 Under the cruel sun.
 'Tis but a plash in the billows,
 'Twill cure my sorrowful head;
 I do not want to wake again,—
 Good night! I'm going to bed!

No. XL.—A POET'S ADMIRER.

THE rich man doats on Robert Burns,
 And all his choicest lore he learns,
 Echoes the slightest words he spake
 For Poetry's and Scotland's sake,—
 And builds a palace in the land,
 That from his door he may command
 The varying beauties of a clime
 Made classic by the poet's rhyme;
 And he is proud of holy work,
 Gives half a million to the Kirk,
 And scatters largess ere he dies,
 Assured of pulpit flatteries,—
 But if poor Burns were still alive,
 Bowed down by want, too weak to strive,
 Would Jamie give him fifty pound,
 To help him over Sorrow's bound?
 Perhaps!—if Burns could do without it!
 If not, "God wot! I more than doubt it!"

No. XLI.—FAME.

WHATE'ER his wit or genius be,
A self-deluding fool is he
Who thinks that immortality
Shall be his bountiful reward
For work achieved, though great and hard,
As hero, painter, sculptor, bard.

Did Homer ever sing?—who knows?
Or Ossian?—Shakespeare's self has foes,
Who say he struts in stolen clothes,
And hint that Bacon wrote *Macbeth*!
Fame for the living is but breath,—
It may be mockery after death!

No. XLII.—TO-MORROW.

FROM birth to death we live in sorrow,
And have no joy but in To-morrow,
That mocks our hope and never breaks
With joys so many as it takes!

No. XLIII.—APPRECIATION.

SWEET is appreciation! wherefore not!
If fools should praise the book that once I wrote,
Why should I weigh their folly? or despise?
Fools may be wiser than the very wise!
And if a man, clear-sighted more than most,
Finds beauties countless as the starry host
In verse of mine, shall I not bless his name,
And thank him for a whiff of coming fame?

No. XLIV.—WHAT TO CALL IT.

'LET's start a new journal to tickle the town,'
Said Robinson, winking to Tomkins and Brown;
'Topographical titles are favourites of late,
So we'll call our new venture—bright thought!—BILLINGSGATE.'

The Mystery of the Pyramids.

BY RICHARD A. PROCTOR.

FEW subjects of inquiry have proved more perplexing than the question of the purpose for which the pyramids of Egypt were built. Even in the remotest ages of which we have historical record, nothing seems to have been known certainly on this point. For some reason or other, the builders of the pyramids concealed the object of these structures, and this so successfully that not even a tradition has reached us which purports to have been handed down from the epoch of the pyramids' construction. We find, indeed, some explanations given by the earliest historians; but they were professedly only hypothetical, like those advanced in more recent times. Including ancient and modern theories, we find a wide range of choice. Some have thought that these buildings were associated with the religion of the early Egyptians; others have suggested that they were tombs; others, that they combined the purposes of tombs and temples; that they were astronomical observatories; defences against the sands of the Great Desert; granaries like those made under Joseph's direction; places of resort during excessive overflows of the Nile; and many other uses have been suggested for them. But none of these ideas are found on close examination to be tenable as representing the sole purpose of the pyramids, and few of them have strong claims to be regarded as presenting even a chief object of these remarkable structures. The significant and perplexing history of the three oldest pyramids—the Great Pyramid of Cheops, Shofu, or Suphis, the pyramid of Chephren, and the pyramid of Mycerinus; and the most remarkable of all the facts known respecting the pyramids generally, viz. the circumstance that one pyramid after another was built as though each had become useless soon after it was finished, are left entirely unexplained by all the theories above mentioned, save one only, the tomb theory, and that does not afford by any means a satisfactory explanation of the circumstances.

I propose to give here a brief account of some of the most suggestive facts known respecting the pyramids, and, after considering the difficulties which beset the theories heretofore advanced, to indicate a theory (new so far as I know) which seems to me to correspond better with the facts than any heretofore advanced; I suggest it, however, rather for consideration than because I regard it as very convincingly supported by the evidence. In fact, to

advance any theory at present with confident assurance of its correctness, would be simply to indicate a very limited acquaintance with the difficulties surrounding the subject.

Let us first consider a few of the more striking facts recorded by history or tradition, noting, as we proceed, whatever ideas they may suggest as to the intended character of these structures.

It is hardly necessary to say, perhaps, that the history of the Great Pyramid is of paramount importance in this inquiry. Whatever purpose pyramids were originally intended to subserve, must have been conceived by the builders of *that* pyramid. New ideas may have been superadded by the builders of later pyramids, but it is unlikely that the original purpose can have been entirely abandoned. Some great purpose there was, which the rulers of ancient Egypt proposed to fulfil by building very massive pyramidal structures on a particular plan. It is by inquiring into the history of the first and most massive of these structures, and by examining its construction, that we shall have the best chance of finding out what that great purpose was.

According to Herodotus, the kings who built the pyramids reigned not more than twenty-eight centuries ago; but there can be little doubt that Herodotus misunderstood the Egyptian priests from whom he derived his information, and that the real antiquity of the pyramid-kings was far greater. He tells us that, according to the Egyptian priests, Cheops 'on ascending the throne plunged into all manner of wickedness. He closed the temples, and forbade the Egyptians to offer sacrifice, compelling them instead to labour one and all in his service; viz. in building the Great Pyramid.' Still following his interpretation of the Egyptian account, we learn that one hundred thousand men were employed for twenty years in building the Great Pyramid, and that ten years were occupied in constructing a causeway by which to convey the stones to the place and in conveying them there. 'Cheops reigned fifty years; and was succeeded by his brother Chephren, who imitated the conduct of his predecessor, built a pyramid—but smaller than his brother's—and reigned fifty-six years. Thus during one hundred and six years, the temples were shut and never opened.' Moreover, Herodotus tells us that 'the Egyptians so detested the memory of these kings, that they do not much like even to mention their names. Hence they commonly call the pyramids after Philiton, a shepherd who at that time fed his flocks about the place.' 'After Chephren, Mycerinus, son of Cheops, ascended the throne. He reopened the temples, and allowed the people to resume the practice of sacrifice. He, too, left a pyramid, but much inferior in size to his father's. It is built, for half of its height, of the

stone of Ethiopia,' or, as Professor Smyth (whose extracts from Rawlinson's translation I have here followed) adds, 'expensive red granite.' 'After Mycerinus, Asychis ascended the throne. He built the eastern gateway of the Temple of Vulcan (Phtha); and, being desirous of eclipsing all his predecessors on the throne, left as a monument of his reign a pyramid of brick.'

This account is so suggestive, as will presently be shown, that it may be well to inquire whether it can be relied on. Now, although there can be no doubt that Herodotus misunderstood the Egyptians in some matters, and in particular as to the chronological order of the dynasties, placing the pyramid-kings far too late, yet in other respects he seems not only to have understood them correctly, but also to have received a correct account from them. The order of the kings above named corresponds with the sequence given by Manetho, and also found in monumental and hieroglyphic records. Manetho gives the names Suphis I., Suphis II., and Mencheres, instead of Cheops, Chephren, and Mycerinus; while, according to the modern Egyptologists, Herodotus's Cheops was Shofo, Shufu, or Koufou; Chephren was Shafre, while he was also called Nou-Shofo or Noum-Shufu as the brother of Shofo; and Mycerinus was Menhere or Menkerre. But the identity of these kings is not questioned. As to the true dates, there is much doubt, and it is probable that the question will long continue open; but the determination of the exact epochs when the several pyramids were built is not very important in connection with our present inquiry. We may, on the whole, fairly take the points quoted above from Herodotus, and proceed to consider the significance of the narrative, with sufficient confidence that in all essential respects it is trustworthy,

There are several very strange features in the account.

In the first place, it is manifest that Cheops (to call the first king by the name most familiar to the general reader) attached great importance to the building of his pyramid. It has been said, and perhaps justly, that it would be more interesting to know the plan of the architect who devised the pyramid than the purpose of the king who built it. But the two things are closely connected. The architect must have satisfied the king that some highly important purpose, in which the king himself was interested, would be subserved by the structure. Whether the king was persuaded to undertake the work as a matter of duty, or only to advance his own interests, may not be so clear. But that the king was most thoroughly in earnest about the work is certain. A monarch in those times would assuredly not have devoted an enormous amount of labour and material to such a scheme unless he was thoroughly

convinced of its great importance. That the welfare of his people was not considered by Cheops in building the Great Pyramid is almost equally certain. He might, indeed, have had a scheme for their good which either he did not care to explain to them or which they could not understand. But the most natural inference from the narrative is that his purpose had no reference whatever to their welfare. For though one could understand his own subjects hating him while he was all the time working for their good, it is obvious that his memory would not have been hated if some important good had eventually been gained from his scheme. Many a far-seeing ruler has been hated while living on account of the very work for which his memory has been revered. But the memory of Cheops and his successors was held in detestation.

May we, however, suppose that, though Cheops had not the welfare of his own people in his thoughts, his purpose was nevertheless not selfish, but intended in some way to promote the welfare of the human race? I say his purpose, because, whoever originated the scheme, Cheops carried it out; it was by means of his wealth and through his power that the pyramid was built. This is the view adopted by Professor Piazzzi Smyth and others, in our own time, and first suggested by John Taylor. 'Whereas other writers,' says Smyth, 'have generally esteemed that the mysterious persons who directed the building of the Great Pyramid (and to whom the Egyptians, in their traditions, and for ages afterwards, gave an immoral and even abominable character) must therefore have been very bad indeed, so that the world at large has always been fond of standing on, kicking, and insulting that dead lion, whom they really knew not; he, Mr. John Taylor, seeing how religiously bad the Egyptians themselves were, was led to conclude, on the contrary, that those *they* hated (and could never sufficiently abuse) might, perhaps, have been pre-eminently good; or were, at all events, of *different religious faith* from themselves.' 'Combining this with certain unmistakable historical facts,' Mr. Taylor deduced reasons for believing that the directors of the building designed to record in its proportions, and in its interior features, certain important religious and scientific truths, not for the people then living, but for men who were to come 4,000 years or so after.

Although I do not propose to discuss here the evidence on which this strange theory rests, there are certain matters connecting it with the above narrative which must here be mentioned. The mention of the shepherd Philiton, who fed his flocks about the place where the Great Pyramid was built, is a singular feature of Herodotus's narrative. It reads like some strange misinterpretation of the story related to him by the Egyptian priests. It is

obvious that if the word Philition did not represent a people, but a person, this person must have been very eminent and distinguished—a shepherd-king, not a mere shepherd. Rawlinson, in a note on this portion of the narrative of Herodotus, suggests that Philitis was probably a shepherd-prince from Palestine, perhaps of Philistine descent, ‘but so powerful and domineering, that it may be traditions of his oppressions in that earlier age which, mixed up afterwards in the minds of later Egyptians with the evils inflicted on their country by the subsequent shepherds of better known dynasties, lent so much fear to their religious hate of Shepherd times and that name.’ Smyth, somewhat modifying this view, and considering certain remarks of Manetho respecting an alleged invasion of Egypt by shepherd-kings, ‘men of an ignoble race (from the Egyptian point of view) who had the confidence to invade our country, and easily subdued it to their power without a battle,’ comes to the conclusion that some Shemite prince, ‘a contemporary of, but rather older than, the Patriarch Abraham,’ visited Egypt at this time, and obtained such influence over the mind of Cheops as to persuade him to erect the pyramid. According to Smyth, the prince was no other than Melchizedek, king of Salem, and the influence he exerted was supernatural. With such developments of the theory we need not trouble ourselves. It seems tolerably clear that certain shepherd-chiefs who came to Egypt during Cheops’ reign were connected in some way with the designing of the Great Pyramid. It is clear also that they were men of a different religion from the Egyptians, and persuaded Cheops to abandon the religion of his people. Taylor, Smyth, and the Pyramidalists generally, consider this sufficient to prove that the pyramid was erected for some purpose connected with religion. ‘The pyramid,’ in fine, says Smyth, ‘was charged by God’s inspired shepherd-prince, in the beginning of human time, to keep a certain message secret and inviolable for 4,000 years, and it has done so; and in the next thousand years it was to enunciate that message to all men, with more than traditional force, more than all the authenticity of copied manuscripts or reputed history; and that part of the pyramid’s usefulness is now beginning.’

There are many very obvious difficulties surrounding this theory; as, for example, (i.) the absurd waste of power in setting supernatural machinery at work 4,000 years ago with cumbrous devices to record its object, when the same machinery, much more simply employed now, would effect the alleged purpose far more thoroughly; (ii.) the enormous amount of human misery and its attendant hatreds brought about by this alleged divine scheme; and (iii.) the futility of an arrangement by which the pyramid

was only to subserve its purpose when it had lost that perfection of shape on which its entire significance depended, according to the theory itself. But, apart from these, there is a difficulty, nowhere noticed by Smyth or his followers, which is fatal, I conceive, to this theory of the pyramid's purpose. The second pyramid, though slightly inferior to the first in size, and probably far inferior in quality of masonry, is still a structure of enormous dimensions, which must have required many years of labour from tens of thousands of workmen. Now, it seems impossible to explain why Chephren built this second pyramid, if we adopt Smyth's theory respecting the first pyramid. For either Chephren knew the purpose for which the Great Pyramid was built, or he did not know it. If he knew that purpose, and it was that indicated by Smyth, then he also knew that no second pyramid was wanted. On that hypothesis, all the labour bestowed on the second pyramid was wittingly and wilfully wasted. This, of course, is incredible. But, on the other hand, if Chephren did not know what was the purpose for which the Great Pyramid was built, what reason could Chephren have had for building a pyramid at all? The only answer to this question seems to be that Chephren built the second pyramid in hopes of finding out why his brother had built the first, and this answer is simply absurd. It is clear enough that, whatever purpose Cheops had in building the first pyramid, Chephren must have had a similar purpose in building the second; and we require a theory which shall at least explain why the first pyramid did not subserve for Chephren the purpose which it subserved or was meant to subserve for Cheops. The same reasoning may be extended to the third pyramid, to the fourth, and in fine to all the pyramids, forty or so in number, included under the general designation of the Pyramids of Ghizeh or Jeezeh. The extension of the principle to pyramids later than the second is especially important as showing that the difference of religion insisted on by Smyth has no direct bearing on the question of the purpose for which the Great Pyramid itself was constructed. For Mycerinus either never left or else returned to the religion of the Egyptians. Yet he also built a pyramid, which, though far inferior in size to the pyramids built by his father and uncle, was still a massive structure, and relatively more costly even than theirs, because built of expensive granite. The pyramid built by Asychis, though smaller still, was remarkable as built of brick; in fact we are expressly told that Asychis desired to eclipse all his predecessors in such labours, and accordingly left this brick pyramid as a monument of his reign.

We are forced, in fact, to believe that there was some special relation between the pyramid and its builder, seeing that each one of

these kings wanted a pyramid of his own. This applies to the Great Pyramid quite as much as to the others, despite the superior excellence of that structure. Or rather, the argument derives its chief force from the superiority of the Great Pyramid. If Chephren, no longer perhaps having the assistance of the shepherd-architects in planning and superintending the work, was unable to construct a pyramid so perfect and so stately as his brother's, the very fact that he nevertheless built a pyramid shows that the Great Pyramid did not fulfil for Chephren the purpose which it fulfilled for Cheops. But, if Smyth's theory were true, the Great Pyramid would have fulfilled finally and for all men the purpose for which it was built. Since this was manifestly not the case, that theory is, I submit, demonstrably erroneous.

It was probably the consideration of this point, viz. that each king had a pyramid constructed for himself, which led to the theory that the pyramids were intended to serve as tombs. This theory was once very generally entertained. Thus we find Humboldt, in his remarks on American pyramids, referring to the tomb theory of the Egyptian pyramids as though it were open to no question. 'When we consider,' he says, 'the pyramidal monuments of Egypt, of Asia, and of the New Continent, from the same point of view, we see that, though their form is alike, their destination was altogether different. The group of pyramids of Ghizeh and at Sakhara in Egypt; the triangular pyramid of the Queen of the Scythians, Zarina, which was a stadium high and three in circumference, and which was decorated with a colossal figure; the fourteen Etruscan pyramids, which are said to have been enclosed in the labyrinth of the king Porsenna, at Clusium; were reared to serve as the sepulchres of the illustrious dead. Nothing is more natural to men than to commemorate the spot where rest the ashes of those whose memory they cherish, whether it be, as in the infancy of the race, by simple mounds of earth, or, in later periods, by the towering height of the tumulus. Those of the Chinese and of Thibet have only a few metres of elevation. Farther to the west the dimensions increase; the tumulus of the king Abyattes, father of Cræsus, in Lydia, was six stadia, and that of Ninus was more than ten stadia in diameter. In the north of Europe the sepulchre of the Scandinavian king Gormus and the queen Daneboda, covered with mounds of earth, are three hundred metres broad, and more than thirty high.'

But while we have abundant reason for believing that in Egypt, even in the days of Cheops and Chephren, extreme importance was attached to the character of the place of burial for distinguished persons, there is nothing in what is known respecting

earlier Egyptian ideas to suggest the probability that any monarch would have devoted many years of his subjects' labour, and vast stores of material, to erect a mass of masonry like the Great Pyramid, solely to receive his own body after death. Far less have we any reason for supposing that many monarchs in succession would do this, each having a separate tomb built for him. It might have been conceivable, had only the Great Pyramid been erected, that the structure had been raised as a mausoleum for all the kings and princes of the dynasty. But it seems utterly incredible that such a building as the Great Pyramid should have been erected for one king's body only—and that, not in the way described by Humboldt, when he speaks of men commemorating the spot where rest the remains of those whose memory they cherish, but at the expense of the king himself whose body was to be there deposited. Besides, the first pyramid, the one whose history must be regarded as most significant of the true purpose of these buildings, was not built by an Egyptian holding in great favour the special religious ideas of his people, but by one who had adopted other views, and those not belonging, so far as can be seen, to a people holding sepulchral rites in exceptional regard.

A still stronger objection against the exclusively tombic theory resides in the fact that this theory gives no account whatever of the characteristic features of the pyramids themselves. These buildings are all, without exception, built on special astronomical principles. Their square bases are so placed as to have two sides lying east and west and two lying north and south, or, in other words, so that their four faces front the four cardinal points. One can imagine no reason why a tomb should have such a position. It is not, indeed, easy to understand why any building at all, except an astronomical observatory, should have such a position. A temple perhaps devoted to sun-worship, and generally to the worship of the heavenly bodies, might be built in that way. For it is to be noticed that the peculiar figure and position of the pyramids would bring about the following relations:—When the sun rose and set south of the east and west points, or (speaking generally) between the autumn and the spring equinoxes, the rays of the rising and setting sun illuminated the southern face of the pyramid; whereas during the rest of the year, that is during the six months between the spring and autumn equinoxes, the rays of the rising and setting sun illuminated the northern face. Again, all the year round the sun's rays passed from the eastern to the western face at solar noon. And lastly, during seven months and a half of each year, namely for three months and three quarters before and after midsummer, the noon rays of the sun fell on all

four faces of the pyramid, or, according to a Peruvian expression (so Smyth avers), the sun shone on the pyramid 'with all his rays.' Such conditions as these might have been regarded as very suitable for a temple devoted to sun-worship. Yet the temple theory is as untenable as the tomb theory. For, in the first place, the pyramid form—as the pyramids were originally built, with perfectly smooth slant-faces, not terraced into steps as now through the loss of the casing-stones—was entirely unsuited for all the ordinary requirements of a temple of worship. And further, this theory gives no explanation of the fact that each king built a pyramid, and each king only one. Similar difficulties oppose the theory that the pyramids were intended to serve as astronomical observatories. For, while their original figure, however manifestly astronomical in its relations, was quite unsuited for observatory work, it is manifest that if such had been the purpose of pyramid-building, so soon as the Great Pyramid had once been built, no other would be needed. Certainly none of the pyramids built afterwards could have subserved any astronomical purpose which the first did not subserve, or have subserved nearly so well as the Great Pyramid those purposes (and they are but few) which that building may be supposed to have fulfilled as an astronomical observatory.

Of the other theories mentioned at the beginning of this paper none seem to merit special notice, except perhaps the theory that the pyramids were made to receive the royal treasures, and this theory rather because of the attention it received from Arabian literati, during the ninth and tenth centuries, than because of any strong reasons which can be suggested in its favour. 'Emulating,' says Professor Smyth, 'the enchanted tales of Bagdad,' the court poets of Al Mamoun (son of the far-famed Haroun al Raschid) 'drew gorgeous pictures of the contents of the pyramid's interior. . . . All the treasures of Sheddad Ben Ad the great Antediluvian king of the earth, with all his medicines and all his sciences, they declared were there, told over and over again. Others, though, were positive that the founder-king was no other than Saurid Ibn Salhouk, a far greater one than the other; and these last gave many more minute particulars, some of which are at least interesting to us in the present day, as proving that, amongst the Egypto-Arabians of more than a thousand years ago, the Jeezeh pyramids, headed by the grand one, enjoyed a pre-eminence of fame vastly before all the other pyramids of Egypt put together; and that if any other is alluded to after the Great Pyramid (which has always been the notable and favourite one, and chiefly was known then as *the East pyramid*), it is either the second one at Jeezeh, under the

name of the West pyramid; or the third one, distinguished as the Coloured pyramid, in allusion to its red granite, compared with the white limestone casings of the other two (which, moreover, from their more near, but by no means exact, equality of size, went frequently under the affectionate designation of "the pair").

The report of Ibn Abd Alkohm, as to what was to be found in each of these three pyramids, or rather of what, according to him, was put into them originally by King Saurid, runs as follows: 'In the Western pyramid, thirty treasuries filled with store of riches and utensils, and with signatures made of precious stones, and with instruments of iron and vessels of earth, and with arms which rust not, and with glass which might be bended and yet not broken, and with strange spells, and with several kinds of *alakakirs* (magical precious stones) single and double, and with deadly poisons, and with other things besides. He made also in the East' (the Great Pyramid) 'divers celestial spheres and stars, and what they severally operate in their aspects, and the perfumes which are to be used to them, and the books which treat of these matters. He put also into the coloured pyramid the commentaries of the priests in chests of black marble, and with every priest a book, in which the wonders of his profession and of his actions and of his nature were written, and what was done in his time, and what is and what shall be from the beginning of time to the end of it.' The rest of this worthy's report relates to certain treasurers placed within these three pyramids to guard their contents, and (like all or most of what I have already quoted) was a work of imagination. Ibn Abd Alkohm, in fact, was a romancist of the first water.

Perhaps the strongest argument against the theory that the pyramids were intended as strongholds for the concealment of treasure, resides in the fact that, search being made, no treasure has been discovered. When the workmen employed by Caliph Al Mamoun, after encountering manifold difficulties, at length broke their way into the great ascending passage leading to the so-called King's Chamber, they found 'a right noble apartment, thirty-four feet long, seventeen broad, and nineteen high, of polished red granite throughout, walls, floor, and ceiling, in blocks squared and true, and put together with such exquisite skill that the joints are barely discernible to the closest inspection. But where is the treasure—the silver and the gold, the jewels, medicines, and arms? These fanatics look wildly around them, but can see nothing, not a single *dirhem* anywhere. They trim their torches, and carry them again and again to every part of that red-walled, flinty hall, but without any better success. Nought but pure polished red granite, in mighty slabs, looks upon them from every side. The room is

clean, garnished too, as it were, and, according to the ideas of its founders, complete and perfectly ready for its visitors so long expected, so long delayed. But the gross minds who occupy it now, find it all barren, and declare that there is nothing whatever for them, in the whole extent of the apartment from one end to another; nothing except an empty stone chest without a lid.'

It is, however, to be noted that we have no means of learning what had happened between the time when the pyramid was built and when Caliph Al Mamoun's workmen broke their way into the King's Chamber. The place may, after all, have contained treasures of some kind; nor, indeed, is it incompatible with other theories of the pyramid to suppose that it was used as a safe receptacle for treasures. It is certain, however, that this cannot have been the special purpose for which the pyramids were designed. We should find in such a purpose no explanation whatever of any of the most stringent difficulties encountered in dealing with other theories. There could be no reason why strangers from the East should be at special pains to instruct an Egyptian monarch how to hide and guard his treasures. Nor, if the Great Pyramid had been intended to receive the treasures of Cheops, would Chephren have built another for his own treasures, which must have included those gathered by Cheops. But, apart from this, how inconceivably vast must a treasure-hoard be supposed to be, the safe guarding of which would have repaid the enormous cost of the Great Pyramid in labour and material! And then, why should a mere treasure-house have the characteristics of an astronomical observatory? Manifestly, if the pyramids were used at all to receive treasures, it can only have been as an entirely subordinate though perhaps convenient means of utilising these gigantic structures.

Having thus gone through all the suggested purposes of the pyramids save two or three which clearly do not possess any claim to serious consideration, and having found none which appear to give any sufficient account of the history and principal features of these buildings, we must either abandon the inquiry or seek for some explanation quite different from any yet suggested. Let us consider what are the principal points of which the true theory of the pyramids should give an account.

In the first place, the history of the pyramids shows that the erection of the first great pyramid was in all probability either suggested to Cheops by wise men who visited Egypt from the East, or else some important information conveyed to him by such visitors caused him to conceive the idea of building the pyramid. In either case we may suppose, as the history indeed suggests, that *these learned men*, whoever they may have been, remained in

Egypt to superintend the erection of the structure. It may be that the architectural work was not under their supervision; in fact, it seems altogether unlikely that shepherd-rulers would have much to teach the Egyptians in the matter of architecture. But the astronomical peculiarities which form so significant a feature of the Great Pyramid were probably provided for entirely under the instructions of the shepherd chiefs who had exerted so strange an influence upon the mind of King Cheops.

Next, it seems clear that self-interest must have been the predominant reason in the mind of the Egyptian king for undertaking this stupendous work. It is true that his change of religion implies that some higher cause influenced him. But a ruler who could inflict such grievous burdens on his people in carrying out his purpose, that for ages afterwards his name was held in utter detestation, cannot have been solely or even chiefly influenced by religious motives. It affords an ample explanation of the behaviour of Cheops in closing the temples and forsaking the religion of his country, to suppose that the advantages which he hoped to secure by building the pyramid depended in some way on his adopting this course. The visitors from the East may have refused to give their assistance on any other terms, or may have assured him that the expected benefit could not be obtained if the pyramid were erected by idolaters. It is certain, in any case, that they were opposed to idolatry; and we have thus some means of inferring who they were and whence they came. We know that one particular branch of one particular race in the East was characterised by a most marked hatred of idolatry in all its forms. Terah and his family, or probably a sect or division of the Chaldæan people, went forth from Ur of the Chaldees, to go into the land of Canaan,—and the reason why they went forth we learn from a book of considerable historical interest (the book of Judith) to have been because ‘they would not worship the gods of their fathers who were in the land of the Chaldæans.’ And the Bible record shows that members of this branch of the Chaldæan people visited Egypt from time to time. They were shepherds, too, which accords well with the account of Herodotus above quoted. We can well understand that persons of this family would have resisted all endeavours to secure their acquiescence in any scheme associated with idolatrous rites. Neither promises nor threats would have had much influence on them. It was a distinguished member of the family, the patriarch Abraham, who said: ‘I have lift up mine hand unto the Lord, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth, that I will not take from a thread even to a shoe-latchet, and that I will not take anything that is thine, lest thou

shouldest say, I have made Abram rich.' Vain would all the promises and all the threats of Cheops have been to men of this spirit. Such men might help him in his plans, suggested, as the history shows, by teachings of their own, but it must be on their own conditions, and those conditions would most certainly include the utter rejection of idolatrous worship by the king in whose behalf they worked, as well as by all who shared in their labours. It seems probable that they convinced both Cheops and Chephren, that unless these kings gave up idolatry, the purpose, whatever it was, which the pyramid was erected to promote would not be fulfilled. The mere fact that the Great Pyramid was built either directly at the suggestion of these visitors, or because they had persuaded Cheops of the truth of some important doctrine, shows that they must have gained great influence over his mind. Rather we may say that he must have been so convinced of their knowledge and power as to have accepted with unquestioning confidence all that they told him respecting the particular subject over which they seemed to possess so perfect a mastery.

But having formed the opinion, on grounds sufficiently assured, that the strangers who visited Egypt and superintended the building of the Great Pyramid were kinsmen of the patriarch Abraham, it is not very difficult to decide what was the subject respecting which they had such exact information. They or their parents had come from the land of the Chaldæans, and they were doubtless learned in all the wisdom of their Chaldæan kinsmen. They were masters, in fact, of the astronomy of their day, a science for which the Chaldæans had shown from the earliest ages the most remarkable aptitude. What the actual extent of their astronomical knowledge may have been it would be difficult to say. But it is certain, from the exact knowledge which later Chaldæans possessed respecting long astronomical cycles, that astronomical observations must have been carried on continuously by that people for many hundreds of years. It is highly probable that the astronomical knowledge of the Chaldæans in the days of Terah and Abraham was much more accurate than that possessed by the Greeks even after the time of Hipparchus.¹ We see, indeed, in the accurate astronomical adjustment of the Great Pyramid that the

¹ It has been remarked that, though Hipparchus had the enormous advantage of being able to compare his own observations with those recorded by the Chaldæans, he estimated the length of the year less correctly than the Chaldæans. It has been thought by some that the Chaldæans were acquainted with the true system of the universe, but I do not know that there are sufficient grounds for this supposition. Diodorus Siculus and Apollonius Mynidius mention, however, that they were able to predict the return of comets, and this implies that their observations had been continued for many centuries with great care and exactness.

architects must have been skilful astronomers and mathematicians; and I may note here, in passing, how strongly this circumstance confirms the opinion that the visitors were kinsmen of Terah and Abraham. All we know from Herodotus and Manetho, all the evidence from the circumstances connected with the religion of the pyramid-kings, and the astronomical evidence given by the pyramids themselves, tends to assure us that members of that particular branch of the Chaldaean family which went out from Ur of the Chaldees because they would not worship the gods of the Chaldeans, extended their wanderings to Egypt, and eventually superintended the erection of the Great Pyramid so far as astronomical and mathematical relations were concerned.

But not only have we already decided that the pyramids were not intended solely or chiefly to subserve the purpose of astronomical observatories, but it is certain that Cheops would not have been personally much interested in any astronomical information which these visitors might be able to communicate. Unless he saw clearly that something was to be gained from the lore of his visitors, he would not have undertaken to erect any astronomical buildings at their suggestion, even if he had cared enough for their knowledge to pay any attention to them whatever. Most probably the reply Cheops would have made to any communications respecting mere astronomy, would have run much in the style of the reply made by the Turkish Cadi, Imaum Ali Zadè, to a friend of Layard's who had apparently bored him about double stars and comets: 'Oh my soul! oh my lamb!' said Ali Zadè, 'seek not after the things which concern thee not. Thou camest unto us, and we welcomed thee: go in peace. Of a truth thou hast spoken many words; and there is no harm done, for the speaker is one and the listener is another. After the fashion of thy people, thou hast wandered from one place to another until thou art happy and content in none. Listen, oh my son! There is no wisdom equal unto the belief in God! He created the world, and shall we liken ourselves unto Him in seeking to penetrate into the mysteries of His creation? shall we say, Behold this star spinneth round that star, and this other star with a tail goeth and cometh in so many years! Let it go! He from whose hand it came will guide and direct it. But thou wilt say unto me, Stand aside, oh man, for I am more learned than thou art, and have seen more things. If thou thinkest that thou art in this respect better than I am, thou art welcome. I praise God that I seek not that which I require not. Thou art learned in the things I care not for; and as for that which thou hast seen, I defile it. Will much knowledge

create thee a double belly, or wilt thou seek paradise with thine eyes?' Such, omitting the references to the Creator, would probably have been the reply of Cheops to his visitors, had they only had astronomical facts to present him with. Or, in the plenitude of his kingly power, he might have more decisively rejected their teaching by removing their heads.

But the shepherd-astronomers had knowledge more attractive to offer than a mere series of astronomical discoveries. Their ancestors had

Watched from the centres of their sleeping flocks
Those radiant Mercuries, that seemed to move
Carrying through æther in perpetual round
Decrees and resolutions of the gods;

and though the visitors of King Cheops had themselves rejected the Sabaistic polytheism of their kinsmen, they had not rejected the doctrine that the stars in their courses affect the fortunes of men. We know that among the Jews, probably the direct descendants of the shepherd-chiefs who visited Cheops, and certainly close kinsmen of theirs, and akin to them also in their monotheism, the belief in astrology was never regarded as a superstition. In fact, we can trace very clearly in the books relating to this people that they believed confidently in the influences of the heavenly bodies. Doubtless the visitors of King Cheops shared the belief of their Chaldaean kinsmen that astrology is a true science, 'founded' indeed (as Bacon expresses their views) 'not in reason and physical contemplations, but in the direct experience and observation of past ages.' Josephus records the Jewish tradition (though not as a tradition but as a fact) that 'our first father, Adam, was instructed in astrology by divine inspiration,' and that Seth so excelled in the science, that, 'foreseeing the Flood and the destruction of the world thereby, he engraved the fundamental principles of his art (astrology) in hieroglyphical emblems, for the benefit of after ages, on two pillars of brick and stone.' He says, farther on, that the patriarch Abraham, 'having learned the art in Chaldæa, when he journeyed into Egypt taught the Egyptians the sciences of arithmetic and astrology.' Indeed, the stranger called Philitis by Herodotus may, for aught that appears, have been Abraham himself; for it is generally agreed that the word Philitis indicated the race and country of the visitors, regarded by the Egyptians as of Philistine descent and arriving from Palestine. However, I am in no way concerned to show that the shepherd-astronomers who induced Cheops to build the Great Pyramid were even contemporaries of Abraham and Melchizedek. What seems sufficiently obvious is all that I care

to maintain, namely, that these shepherd-astronomers were of Chaldæan birth and training, and therefore astrologers, though, unlike their Chaldæan kinsmen, they rejected Sabaism or star-worship, and taught the belief in one only Deity.

Now, if these visitors were astrologers, who persuaded Cheops, and were honestly convinced themselves, that they could predict the events of any man's life by the Chaldæan method of casting nativities, we can readily understand many circumstances connected with the pyramids which have hitherto seemed inexplicable. The pyramid built by a king would no longer be regarded as having reference to his death and burial, but to his birth and life, though after his death it might receive his body. Each king would require to have his own nativity-pyramid, built with due symbolical reference to the special celestial influences affecting his fortunes. Every portion of the work would have to be carried out under special conditions, determined according to the mysterious influences ascribed to the different planets and their varying positions,—

now high, now low, then hid,
Progressive, retrograde, or standing still.

If the work had been intended only to afford the means of predicting the king's future, the labour would have been regarded by the monarch as well bestowed. But astrology involved much more than the mere prediction of future events. Astrology claimed to possess the power of ruling the planets,—that is, of course, not of ruling the motions of those bodies, but of providing against evil influences or strengthening good influences which they supposed the celestial orbs to exert in particular aspects. Thus we can understand that while the mere basement layers of the pyramid would have served for the process of casting the royal nativity, with due mystic observances, the further progress of building the pyramid would supply the necessary means and indications for ruling the planets most potent in their influence upon the royal career.

Remembering the mysterious influence which astrologers ascribed to special numbers, figures, positions, and so forth, the care with which the Great Pyramid was so proportioned as to indicate particular astronomical and mathematical relations is at once explained. The four sides of the square base were carefully placed with reference to the cardinal points precisely like the four sides of the ordinary square scheme of nativity.¹ The eastern side faced

¹ The language of the modern Zadkiels and Raphaels, though meaningless and absurd in itself, yet, as assuredly derived from the astrology of the oldest times, may here be quoted. (It certainly was not invented to give support to the theory I am at present advocating.) Thus runs the jargon of the tribe: 'In order to illustrate plainly to the reader what astrologers mean by the "houses of heaven," it is proper for

the Ascendant, the southern faced the Mid-heaven, the western faced the Descendant, and the northern faced the Imum Cœli. Again, we can understand that the architects would have made a circuit of the base correspond in length with the number of days in the year—a relation which, according to Prof. P. Smyth, is fulfilled in this manner, that the four sides contain one hundred times as many pyramid inches as there are days in the year. The pyramid inch, again, is itself mystically connected with astronomical relations, for its length is equal to the five hundred millionth part of the earth's diameter, to a degree of exactness corresponding well with what we might expect Chaldæan astronomers to attain. Prof. Smyth, indeed, believes that it was exactly equal to that proportion of the earth's polar diameter—a view which would correspond with his theory that the architects of the Great Pyramid were assisted by divine inspiration; but what is certainly known about the sacred cubit, which contained twenty-five of these inches, corresponds better with the diameter which the Chaldæan astronomers, if they worked very carefully, would have deduced from observations made in their own country, on the supposition which they would naturally have made that the earth is a perfect globe, not compressed at the poles. It is not indeed at all certain that the sacred cubit bore any reference to the earth's dimensions; but this seems tolerably well made out—that the sacred cubit was about 25 inches in length, and that the circuit of the pyramid's base contained a hundred inches for every day of the year. Relations such as these are precisely what we might expect to find in buildings having an astrological significance. Similarly, it would correspond well with the mysticism of astrology that the pyramid should be so proportioned as to make the height be the radius of a circle whose circumference would equal the circuit of the pyramid's base. Again, that long slant tunnel, leading downwards from the pyramid's northern face, would at once find a meaning in this astrological theory. The slant tunnel pointed to the pole-star of

him to bear in mind the four cardinal points. The eastern, facing the rising sun, has at its centre the first grand angle or first house, termed the Horoscope or ascendant. The northern, opposite the region where the sun is at midnight, or the *cusp* of the lower heaven or nadir, is the Imum Cœli, and has at its centre the fourth house. The western, facing the setting sun, has at its centre the third grand angle or seventh house or descendant. And lastly, the southern, facing the noonday sun, has at its centre the astrologer's tenth house, or Mid-heaven, the most powerful angle or house of honour. 'And although,' proceeds the modern astrologer, 'we cannot in the ethereal blue discern these lines or terminating divisions, both reason and experience assure us that they certainly exist; therefore the astrologer has certain grounds for the choice of his four angular houses' (out of twelve in all), 'which, resembling the palpable demonstration they afford, are in the astral science esteemed the most powerful of the whole.'—Raphael's *Manual of Astrology*.

Cheops' time, when due north below the true pole of the heavens. This circumstance had no observational utility. It could afford no indication of time, because a pole-star moves very slowly, and the pole-star of Cheops' day must have been in view through that tunnel for more than an hour at a time. But, apart from the mystical significance which an astrologer would attribute to such a relation, it may be shown that this slant tunnel is precisely what the astrologer would require in order to get the horoscope correctly.

Another consideration remains to be mentioned which, while strengthening the astrological theory of the pyramids, may bring us even nearer to the true aim of those who planned and built these structures.

It is known also that the Chaldæans from the earliest times pursued the study of alchemy in connection with astrology, not hoping to discover the philosopher's stone by chemical investigations alone, but by carrying out such investigations under special celestial influence. The hope of achieving this discovery, by which he would at once have had the means of acquiring illimitable wealth, would of itself account for the fact that Cheops expended so much labour and material in the erection of the Great Pyramid, seeing that, of necessity, success in the search for the philosopher's stone would be a main feature of his fortunes, and would therefore be astrologically indicated in his nativity-pyramid, or perhaps even be secured by following mystical observances proper for ruling his planets.

The elixir of life may also have been among the objects which the builders of the pyramids hoped to discover.

It may be noticed, as a somewhat significant circumstance, that, in the account given by Ibn Abd Alkohm of the contents of the various pyramids, those assigned to the Great Pyramid relate entirely to astrology and associated mysteries. It is, of course, clear that Abd Alkohm drew largely on his imagination. Yet it seems probable that there was also some basis of tradition for his ideas. And certainly one would suppose that, as he assigned a treasurer to the East pyramid ('a statue of black agate, his eyes open and shining, sitting on a throne with a lance'), he would have credited the building with treasure also, had not some tradition taught otherwise. But he says that King Saurid placed in the East pyramid, not treasures, but 'divers celestial spheres and stars, and what they severally operate in their aspects, and the perfumes which are to be used to them, and the books which treat of these matters.'¹

¹ Arabian writers give the following account of Egyptian progress in astrology

But, after all, it must be admitted that the strongest evidence in favour of the astrological (and alchemical) theory of the pyramids is to be found in the circumstance that all other theories seem untenable. The pyramids were undoubtedly erected for some purpose which was regarded by their builders as most important. This purpose certainly related to the personal fortunes of the kingly builders. It was worth an enormous outlay of money, labour, and material. This purpose was such, furthermore, that each king required to have his own pyramid. It was in some way associated with astronomy, for the pyramids are built with most accurate reference to celestial aspects. It also had its mathematical and mystical bearings, seeing that the pyramids exhibit mathematical and symbolical peculiarities not belonging to their essentially structural requirements. And lastly, the erection of the pyramids was in some way connected with the arrival of certain learned persons from Palestine, and presumably of Chaldaean origin. All these circumstances accord well with the theory I have advanced; while only some of them, and these not the most characteristic, accord with any of the other theories. Moreover, no fact known respecting the pyramids or their builders is inconsistent with the astrological (and alchemical) theory. On the whole, then, if it cannot be regarded as demonstrated (in its general bearing, of course, for we cannot expect any theory about the pyramids to be established in minute details), the astrological theory may fairly be described as having a greater degree of probability in its favour than any hitherto advanced.

and the mystical arts: Naerawach, the progenitor of Misraim, was the first Egyptian prince, and the first of the magicians who excelled in astrology and enchantment. Retiring into Egypt with his family of eighty persons, he built Essons, the most ancient city of Egypt, and commenced the first dynasty of Misraimitish princes, who excelled as cabalists, diviners, and in the mystic arts generally. The most celebrated of the race were Naerach, who first represented by images the twelve signs of the zodiac; Gharnak, who openly described the arts before kept secret; Hersall, who first worshipped idols; Sehlouk, who worshipped the sun; Saurid (King Saurid of Ibn Abd Alkohm's account), who erected the first pyramids and invented the magic mirror; and Pharaoh, the last king of the dynasty, whose name was afterwards taken as a kingly title, as Cæsar later became a general imperial title.

GOOD STORIES OF MAN AND OTHER ANIMALS.

BY CHARLES READE,

10. *The Jilt.*

A YARN.

PART IV.

ALL this time the schooner had been running thirteen knots an hour, before a S.W. breeze, and Laxton soon saw a port under his lee, with many ships at anchor; the sight fired his poor brain; he unfurled two black pennants with a white head and cross-bones, one at each of his mast-heads, and flew a similar ensign at his main-peak, and so stood in for the anchorage, like a black kite swooping into a poultry yard.

Greaves soon came to from his fit; but he had a racking pain across the brow, and the doctor dreaded brain-fever; however, a violent bleeding relieved the sufferer, and Nature, relenting, sent this much enduring man a long, heavy sleep, whence he awoke with an even pulse, but fell into a sullen, dogged state of mind, sustained only by some vague, and not very reasonable, hope of vengeance.

But now the ladies interfered; from one to another they had picked up some of his story. He was the one hero of romance in the ship; and his ill-luck, bodily and mental, before their eyes, their hearts melted with pity, and they came to the rescue. However timid a single lady may be, four can find courage, when acting in concert. They visited him in his cabin, in pairs; they made him, in one day, by division of labour, a fine cloth shoe for his bad foot; they petted him, and poured consolation on him; and one of them, Mrs. General Meredith, who had a mellow, sympathetic voice, after beating coyly about the bush a bit, wormed his whole story out of him, and instantly told it to the others, and they were quite happy the rest of the voyage, having a real live love-story to talk over. Mrs. Meredith gave him her address at Hong-Kong, and made him promise to call on her.

At last they reached that port, and the passengers dispersed. Greaves went on board the 'Centaur,' and was heartily welcomed.

He reported his arrival to the admiral, and fell at once into the routine of duty. He intended to confide in his good-natured friend the second mate, but was deterred by hearing that a new steam

corvette was about to be despatched to the island, to look after pirates. She was to be ready in less than a month.

Nothing was more likely than that the admiral would give the command to his flag-lieutenant. Indeed, the chances were five to one. So Greaves said to himself: 'I'll hold my tongue about that madman, and then if I have the good luck to fall in with him I can pretend to take him for a pirate, and board him, and rescue her.'

So he held his tongue, and in due course it was notified to him that he was to command the corvette, as soon as her armament should be complete.

It did not escape Lieutenant Greaves that the mad cruiser might be cruising in Polynesia, while he was groping the Chinese islands with his corvette; still there was a chance; and, as it seemed the only one, his sad heart clung to it. In England, time, and a serious malady, had closed his wound; but the sight of Ellen's face, pale and unhappy, and the possession of her letter, which proved that she feared her husband more than she loved him, had opened his wound again, and renewed all his love, and all his pain.

But, whilst he was waiting, and sickening with impatience at the delays in fitting out his corvette for service, an incident occurred that struck all his plans aside in a moment, and taught him how impossible it is for man to foresee what a single day may bring forth.

Admiral Hervey was on the quarter-deck of the 'Centaur,' and a group of his officers conversing to leeward of him, at a respectful distance, when suddenly a schooner, making for the port, hoisted a black flag, with Death's-head and cross-bones at her mast-heads and her main-peak, and came bowling in; she steered right for the 'Centaur,' just shaved her stern, ran on about a cable's length, hove up in the wind, and anchored between the flag-ship and the port she was watching.

It really looked as if this comic pirate meant to pour his little broadside into the mighty 'Centaur,' and get blown out of the water in a moment.

Then Greaves began to ask himself whether he was right not to tell the admiral all about this vessel. But while he hesitated, that worthy did not. He grinned at the absurdity of the thing, but he frowned at the impudence. 'This won't do,' he said. Then, turning towards his officers, 'Lieutenant Greaves!'

'Sir!'

'Take an armed party, and bring the master of that schooner to me.'

'Ay, sir'





"OH! GO AWAY, HE WILL KILL US BOTH."

In a very few minutes, Lieutenant Greaves, with two boats containing armed sailors and marines, and the union-jack flying, put off from the 'Centaur' and boarded the schooner.

At sight of his cocked hat, the schooner's men slunk forward, and abandoned their commander. He sat aft, on a barrel of gunpowder, a revolver in each hand, and vociferated.

Greaves stepped up, and fixed his eye on him. He was raving mad, and dangerous. Greaves ordered two stout fellows to go round him, whilst he advanced. Then, still fixing his eye on the maniac, he so mesmerised him that he did not notice the other assailants. At one moment they pinned him behind, and Greaves bounded on him like a cat. Bang!—bang!—went two shots, ploughing the deck; and Laxton was secured and tied, and bundled, shrieking, cursing, and foaming, on board one of the boats, and taken to the flag-ship.

Meantime, Greaves stepped forward, and said a few words to the men, 'Now then, Jack, do you want to get into trouble?'

The men's caps went off in a moment. 'No, your honour; it ain't our fault.'

'Then strike those ridiculous colours, and fly your union-jack at the main-peak; this schooner is under royal command for the present.'

'Ay, ay, sir.'

This was done in a moment, and meantime Greaves ran down the companion-ladder, and knocked at the cabin door.

No answer.

Knocked again, and listened.

He heard a faint moan.

He drew back, as far as he could, ran furiously at the door, and gave it such a tremendous kick with his sound foot that the lock gave way, and the door burst open.

Then the scared Ellen saw a cocked hat in the doorway, and the next moment her old lover was by her side, untying her hair, and cutting the ligatures carefully, with tender ejaculations of pity.

'Oh, Arthur!' she sobbed. 'Ah!—go away, he will kill us both.'

'No, no; don't you be frightened. He is under arrest; and I command the schooner, by the admiral's orders; don't tremble so, darling. It is all over. Why, you are under the guns of the flag-ship, and you have got me. Oh, my poor Ellen, did ever I think to see you used like this?'

So then they had a cry together; and he said everything in the world to comfort her.

But it was not to be done in a moment. The bonds were

gone; but the outrage remained. 'I want a woman!' she cried, and hid her face. 'Arthur, bring me a woman!'

'That I will,' said he; and, seeing paper and envelopes on a table, he dashed off a line to the admiral:—

'Lady on board the schooner in great distress. May I send her ashore to female friends?'

He sent the remaining boat off with this, and the answer came back directly:—

'Act according to your discretion. You can go ashore.'

As soon as he got this, he told Mrs. Laxton he would take her to Mrs. General Meredith, or invite that lady on board.

Mrs. Laxton said she felt unable to move; so then Greaves despatched a midshipman in the boat, with a hasty line, and assisted Mrs. Laxton to the sofa, and, holding her hand, begged her to dismiss all her fears.

She was too shaken, however, to do that, and sat crying and quivering; she seemed ashamed too, and humiliated. So this honest fellow, thinking she would perhaps be glad if he left her, placed two marines at her cabin door, to give her confidence, and went on deck, and gave some orders, which were promptly obeyed.

But very soon he was sent for to the cabin. 'Pray don't desert me!' said Mrs. Laxton. 'The sight of you gives me courage.' After a while, she said: 'Ah, you return good for evil.'

'Don't talk like that,' said he. 'Why, I am the happiest fellow afloat, now. I got your letter. But I never thought I should be so happy as to rescue you.'

'Happy!' said she. 'I shall never be happy again. And I don't believe you will. Pray don't forget I am a married woman.'

'I don't forget that.'

'Married to a madman. I hope no harm will come to him.'

'I will take care no harm comes to *you*.'

Then Greaves, who had read no French novels, and respected the marriage tie, became more distant and respectful, and, to encourage her, said: 'Mrs. Laxton, the lady I have sent to, admired you on board the ship, and I am sure, if she gets my letter, she will do more for you than a poor fellow like me can, now you are out of danger. She is a general's wife, and was very kind to me.'

'You are very good and thoughtful,' said Mrs. Laxton.

Then there was an awkward silence; and it was broken by the arrival of the boat, with General Meredith and his wife.

Greaves got them on board the schooner, shook hands with the lady, and proposed to her to see Mrs. Laxton alone.

'You are right,' said she.

Greaves showed her to the cabin; and I don't know all that passed, but in a very short time these ladies, who had never met but once, were kissing each other, with wet eyes.

Mrs. Meredith insisted on taking her new friend home with her. Mrs. Laxton acquiesced, joyfully; and, for once, a basket of lady's clothes was packed in five minutes.

The boat put off again, and Greaves looked sad. So Mrs. Meredith smiled to him, and said: 'You know where to find us. Don't be long.'

Greaves watched the boat, till it was lost among the small shipping; then placed the midshipman in charge, and went at once on board the flag-ship.

Here he heard that the master of the schooner had been taken on the quarter-deck, and requested, civilly enough, to explain his extraordinary conduct; but had sworn at the admiral, and called him an old woman; whereupon, the admiral had not shown any anger, but had said 'Clap him in irons,' concluding that was what he expected and desired.

Then this doughty sailor, Greaves, who had been going to kill his rival at sight, &c., was seized with compunction the moment that rival was powerless. He went boldly to the admiral, and asked leave to give information. He handed him Mrs. Laxton's letter.

'Oh!' said the admiral; 'then he is mad?'

'As a March hare, sir. And I'm afraid putting him in irons will make him worse. It is a case for a lunatic asylum.'

'You won't find one here; but the marine hospital has a ward for lunatics. I know that, for we had to send a foretop-man there, last week. I'll give you an order, and you can take him ashore at once.'

Then Greaves actually took the poor wretch, who had wrecked his happiness, and was now himself a wreck, on board a boat, and conveyed him to the hospital, and instructed the manager not to show him any unnecessary severity, but to guard against self-destruction.

Then he went directly to Mrs. Meredith and reported what he had done.

Mrs. Laxton, in spite of all remonstrance, would go and see her husband that night; but she found him in a strait waistcoat, foaming and furious, and using such language, she was obliged to retire horror-stricken.

About five in the morning he burst a blood-vessel in the brain, and at noon next day all his troubles were over.

Mrs. Laxton mourned him, and buried him, and Greaves held aloof, not liking to go near her just now; for he was too frank and simple to pretend he shared her grief. Yet he had sense enough to understand that, at such a time, a generous spirit remembers only a man's good qualities; and Laxton had many; but, even when he married Ellen Ap Reice, the seeds were in him of that malady which destroyed him at last.

However, if Greaves was out of the widow's sight, he was not out of her mind, for Mrs. Meredith knew his whole tale, and told her how he had gone to Tenby, and had taken her marriage to heart, and had been at death's door in London.

At last Greaves called, having the excuse of a message from the admiral. He wished to know if Mrs. Laxton would sell eight of her guns to the Government, and also allow her sailors to be drafted into his ships, all but two, that number being sufficient to take care of her vessel in port.

Mrs. Laxton said: 'I shall do nothing of the kind, without *your* advice, Arthur—Mr. Greaves. Why, how am I to get home?'

Then Greaves advised her to sell the guns, for they were worse than useless; but to part with the men only on condition that the admiral would man the schooner 'when required' with new hands, that had never played tricks at sea under her late commander.

Greaves called once or twice in the course of this negotiation, and thought Ellen had never looked so lovely as in her widow's cap. But he felt bound to abstain from making love, though he was bursting with it, and both ladies saw it, and pretended not.

But one day he came to them in great dismay, and told them the guns had been bought for the steam corvette he was to command, and she would be ready in a week, and he should have to go on his cruise. 'I am very unfortunate,' said he.

The words were scarcely out of his mouth, when his friend, the second lieutenant, was announced. 'Beg pardon, ladies; but here's a letter from the admiral, for Greaves; and we all hope it's promotion.'

He produced an enormous letter, and sure enough Lieutenant Greaves was now a commander. 'Hurrah!' shouted the second lieutenant, and retired.

'This would have made me very happy, once,' said Greaves; then cast a despairing look at Ellen, and went off, all in a hurry, not to break down.

Then Mrs. Laxton had a cry round her friend's neck.

But next day the same Greaves came in all joyous. 'I was a

fool,' said he. 'I forgot the rule of the service. An admiral can't have two commanders. That fine fellow, who came after me with the news, is lieutenant, in my place; and I'm to go home for orders.'

'Oh, I'm so glad!' said Ellen. 'When must you go?'

'Oh, I dare say I might stay another fortnight or so. When are you going home, Mrs. Laxton?'

'The very first opportunity; and Mrs. Meredith is to go with me. Won't it be nice?'

'Yes,' said he; 'but it would be nicer if I could be third man. But no such luck for me, I suppose.'

Those two ladies now put their heads together, and boarded the admiral. He knew Mrs. Meredith; but was a little surprised, though too true a tar to be displeased. They were received in his cabin, and opened their business.

Mrs. Laxton wanted to go home immediately in her schooner, and she had no crew.

'Well, madam, you are not to suffer for your civility to us. We will man your schooner for you in forty-eight hours.'

'Oh, thank you, admiral! But the worst of it is I have no one to command her.'

'No sailing-master?'

'No, my poor husband sailed her himself.'

'Ay, I remember, poor fellow! Besides' (looking at the beautiful widow), 'I would not trust you to a sailing-master.'

'What we thought, admiral, was, that as we gave up the guns, and the sailors, perhaps you would be so kind as to lend us an officer.'

'What, out of Her Majesty's fleet? I could not do that. But, now I think of it, I've got the very man for you. Here's Commander Greaves, going home, on his promotion. He is as good an officer as any on the station.'

'Oh, admiral, if *you* think so well of him, he will be a godsend to poor us!'

'Well, then, he is at your service, ladies; and you could not do better.'

Greaves was a proud and joyful man. 'My luck has turned,' said he.

He ballasted the schooner and provisioned her, at Mrs. Laxton's expense, who had received a large sum of money for her guns. The two ladies occupied the magnificent cabin. He took a humbler berth, weighed anchor, and away for old England.

I shall not give the reader any nautical details of another voyage, but a brief sketch of things distinct from navigation that happened on board.

Mrs. Laxton was coy for some days; then friendly; then affectionate; and, off the Cape, tyrannical. 'You are not the Arthur Greaves I remember,' said she; 'he had not a horrid beard.'

'Why, I suffered for not having one,' said he.

'What I mean,' said she, 'is that you do not awaken in me the associations you would but for that—appendage.'

'You wish those associations awakened?'

'I don't know. Do you?'

'Indeed I do?'

'Then let me see you as you used to be—Arthur.'

The beard came off next morning.

'Ah!' said Mrs. Laxton; and, to do her justice, she felt a little compunction at her tyranny, and disposed to reconcile him to his loss. She was so kind to him, that, at Madeira, he asked her to marry him.

'To be sure I will,' said she—'some day. Why, I believe we are engaged.'

'I am sure of it,' said he.

'Then, of course, I *must* marry you. But there's one—little—condition.'

'Must I grow a beard again?'

'No. The condition is—I am afraid you won't like it.'

'Perhaps not; but I don't care if I am to be paid by marrying you.'

'Well then, it is—you must leave the service.'

'Leave the service! You cannot be serious? What, just when I am on the road to the red flag at the fore. Besides, how are we to live? I have no other means, at present; and I am not going to wait for dead men's shoes.'

'Papa is rich, *dear*, and I can sell the yacht for a trading vessel. She is worth ten thousand pounds, I'm told.'

'Oh, then I am to be idle, and eat my wife's bread.'

'And butter, *dear*. I promise it shall not be dry bread?'

'I prefer a crust, earned like a man.'

'You don't mean to say that you won't leave the service to oblige *me, sir*?'

'Anything else you like; but I cannot leave the service.'

'Then I can't marry you, my sailor bold,' chanted the tyrannical widow, and retired to her cabin.

She told Mrs. Meredith; and that lady scolded her, and lectured her, till she pouted and was very nearly crying.

However, she vouchsafed an explanation—'One requires change. I have been the slave of one man, and now I *must* be the tyrant of another.'

Mrs. Meredith suggested that rational freedom would be a sufficient change from her condition under Laxton.

‘Rational freedom!’ said the widow, contemptuously; ‘that is neither one thing nor the other. I will be a slave, or a tyrant. He will give in, as he did about the beard, if you don’t interfere. I’ll be cross one day, and affectionate the next, and all sweetness the next. He will soon find out which he likes best, and he will give in, poor dear fellow.’

I suppose that in a voyage round the world these arts might have conquered; but they sighted the Lizard without Greaves yielding, and both were getting unhappy; so Mrs. Meredith got them together, and proposed she should marry him, and if, in one year after marriage, she insisted on his leaving the service, he would be bound in honour to do so.

‘I’m afraid that comes to the same thing,’ said Greaves.

‘No, it does not,’ said Mrs. Meredith. ‘Long before a year she will have given up her nonsensical notion, that wives can be happy tyrannising over the man they love, and you will be master.’

‘Aha!’ said Mrs. Laxton, ‘we shall see.’

This being settled, Ellen suddenly appeared with her engaged ring on her finger, and was so loving, that Greaves was almost in heaven. They landed Mrs. Meredith, with all the honours, at Plymouth, and telegraphed the Mayor of Tenby. Next day they sailed into the Welsh harbour, and landed. They were both received with open arms by the mayor and old Dewar; and it was the happiest house in Wales.

Ellen stayed at home; but Greaves lived on board the ship, till the wedding-day.

Ellen, still on the doctrine of opposition, would be cried in church, because the last time she had been married by licence; and, as she had sailed away from church the first time, she would travel by land, and no farther than St. David’s.

They were soon back at Tenby; and she ordered Greaves to take her on board the yacht, with a black leather bag.

‘Take that into the cabin, dear,’ said she.

Then she took out some curious keys, out of her pocket, and opened a secret place, that nobody would have discovered. She showed him a great many bags of gold, and a pile of bank-notes. ‘We are not so very poor, Arthur,’ said she. ‘You will have a little butter to your bread. You know I promised you should. And there is money settled on me; and he left me a great deal of money, besides, when he was in his senses, poor fellow. I could not tell before; or papa would have had it settled on me; and

that lowers a husband. Being henpecked a *very little*—quite *privately*—does not,' said she, cajolingly.

Greaves was delighted, within certain limits. 'I am glad to find you are rich,' said he. 'But I hope you won't make me leave the service. Money is not everything.'

'I promise never to discharge you from *my* service, dear. I know your value too well.'

They spent a happy fortnight in Tenby, as man and wife.

One day they walked on the south sands, and, somehow, found themselves in Merlin's cave.

Here Ellen sat, with her head on that faithful shoulder, and he looking down on her with inexpressible tenderness.

Presently she gave a scream, and started up, and was out of the cavern in a moment. He followed her, a little alarmed. 'What is the matter?'

'Oh, Arthur, a dream! Such a dreadful one! I dreamt I played you false, and married a gentleman with a beard, and he was mad, and took me all round the world, and ill-used me, and tied me by the hair, and you rescued me; and then I found, too late, it was you I esteemed and loved, and we were parted for ever. Oh, what a dream! And so vivid!'

'How extraordinary!' said he. 'Would you believe I dreamed that I lost you in that very way, and was awfully ill, and went to sea again, and found you lashed to a table by your beautiful hair, and lost to me for ever?'

'Poor Arthur!—What a blessing it was only a dream!'

Soon after the pair had come to this little historical arrangement, they settled in London; and Mrs. Greaves, being as beautiful as ever, and extremely rich, exerted her powers of pleasing, to advance her husband's interests. The consequence is he remains in the service, but is at present employed in the Education Department. She no longer says he must leave the service; her complaint now is that she loves him too well to govern him as should be. But she is firm on this, that, if he takes a command, she shall go with him; and she will do it, too.

Her ripe beauty is dazzling; she is known to be wealthy. The young fellows look from her to her husband, and say, 'What on earth could she have seen in that man, to marry him?'

I wonder how many of these young swells will vie with him in earnest, and earn a lovely woman both by doing and suffering!

The End.

François Villon.

THE name of François Villon, the scapegrace scholar and poet, is not so familiar to English ears as the merit of its bearer deserves. Many reasons for this state of affairs might be brought forward; amongst others, perhaps, the difficulty of reading Old French—a difficulty, however, which is easily conquered by a little patience and practice—and, secondly, the difficulty of obtaining a convenient and well-annotated edition. This last excuse can be urged no longer after the labours of M. Pierre Jannet, whose edition of Villon's works is the most complete and satisfactory for all practical purposes, although the biographical part has been to a great extent superseded by the recently published work of M. Auguste Longnon. In France Villon has always been more or less known and commended by critics and lovers of poetry, from Clément Marot and Boileau down to Théophile Gautier and Sainte-Beuve; and his verses, which were kept alive by oral tradition, were amongst the earliest popular books printed in Paris, the first edition in quarto bearing the date of 1489. It must not be imagined for a moment that the writings of Villon are similar in character and worth to the productions of a host of obscure scribblers and poetasters of the Elizabethan and Jacobian periods, which have lately been unearthed in such rank abundance by literary enthusiasts, who allow their judgment to be blinded by the dust of antiquity and value the rust rather than the gold. Their misdirected and unedifying employment has, not without reason, been likened to the digging up of coprolites. Villon, on the contrary, is interesting both on account of the intrinsic value of his work and because he occupies a well-defined and important position in the history of French literature, while his life is interesting both in itself and for the light which it throws on contemporary society and manners. In this article it is proposed first to give a sketch of the poet's life, embodying the results of the most recent research, and then to consider Villon's works and their place in the literary history of France.

I. Villon has justly been regarded as the prince and laureate of Bohemia, that land of letters and licence, whose inhabitants live in a state of hostility to the usages and conventions of society, and so far disregard the code of honesty and fair dealing as to consider perfect solvency to be incompatible with mental effort or ideal

happiness. The mode of life, like that of the gipsy and the 'noble savage,' presents only its picturesque side to the outer world; and just as men of an adventurous turn of mind have been known to give up a reputable existence to join a tribe of wandering gipsies, so numbers of young gentlemen, whose means put them above the sordid necessities of Bohemianism, have built themselves an imaginary Paradise out of the charming stories of Murger and others, and felt it their duty to live the life of a Savage and a Chatterton, and imitate the vagaries of eccentric and impecunious talent. To dine once or twice a week, to live in a garret, or, better still, to sleep under the canopy of heaven, to wear a threadbare and tattered velvet coat, to let their hair grow long and dishevelled, seems to them for a time the height of human felicity. These amateur Bohemians, however, as Henri Murger puts it, are at last overcome by a diet which would have sent Hercules into a consumption; and, remembering the solid fare of the paternal dining-table, the prodigals return home, marry their little cousins, and settle down in the provinces, where they have the satisfaction of describing *la misère d'artiste* with the emphasis of experience.

The life of Villon, about which we are now enabled to speak with some confidence, thanks to the researches of M. Longnon, is one which ought to put *la vie de Bohème* in its true light, and to disenchant the most romantic and ingenuous youth. It is the life of a man who had the ideas and sensibilities of a poet, and who, perhaps more than any other writer before or after Rabelais, possessed and gave expression to that *esprit gauclois*, the spirit of Rabelais, Voltaire, and Béranger, which marks off and distinguishes French literature, and gives it a flavour and vivacity which can only be paralleled from the relics of Attic culture. Yet, with shame be it said, Villon was a common criminal, a master in all the tricks and rogueries of a Pathelin and a Scapin, a hero in tavern brawls, a burglar, and a highwayman. This summary of the poet's character is sufficient to lead the reader to anticipate a picture of human inconsistency at once curious and instructive. Up till lately almost all that has been known of Villon has been collected from his poems. The subject of his poems is himself, and his biography is the key to his works. We might have expected some mention of Villon by his contemporaries or successors; but when we remember that he lived before the introduction of printing into France, that his contemporaries were not given to writing, and that the century which followed his death was singularly barren in literary results, we shall not be surprised that almost the only contemporary notice we have consists of a more

than doubtful story of Rabelais. By careful and patient searching of university and judicial records M. Longnon has found out that Villon's family name was Montcorbier. This discovery will, once for all, settle a much disputed point amongst critics. Sainte-Beuve was led to suppose, on the authority of some lines which bear obvious traces of later composition, that Villon's real name was Corbeuil, and that he was born at Anvers, near Pontoise, and that he derived the name of Villon from his master. For what reason he adopted the name of Villon is not known; we know, however, that his patron at Paris was named Guillaume Villon, and that the poet lived in his house. From the beginning of the 'Petit Testament' we know that in the year 1456 Villon was twenty-five years of age; consequently he was born in the year when the English took Rouen and burnt there *Jehanne, la bonne Lorraine*. His parents, as he tells us himself, were poor:—

Pauvre je suys de ma jeunesse,
De pauvre et de petite extrace.

His mother could not read—*onques lettre ne leuz*—and his father was probably a cobbler or leather-worker. Villon was a scholar of the University, and went through all the joys and troubles of the life of a poor student—that life of privation and irregular pleasure which has been celebrated in song and story since the time of Rutebœuf, and which has been so charmingly and pathetically described in our own time by the pen of Henri Murger. In 1450 Villon took the degree of Bachelor of Arts, and in 1452 proceeded to that of Master of Arts. He then read under a preacher of some celebrity—Jean de Conflans—and studied theology either at the Collège de Navarre or at the Sorbonne. With what success he pursued his studies is not known; but it is certain that he did not obtain the degree of Master in Theology, which was considered the crowning point of the University course in those days. During this time Villon probably lived at the house of his patron, Guillaume Villon, a chaplain in the Church of Saint-Benoit. The house, known as the 'Hôtel de la Porte Rouge,' was situated at the back of the church, which fronted the quaint old Rue Saint-Jacques, of immemorial printing and bookbinding associations; and close at hand was the tavern 'La Mule,' where the poet contrived his rogueries and met his associates in villany. Although he was living in the house of an ecclesiastic, it is not probable that the poet's conduct was very reputable.

With the students in those days their existence each day was a work of genius; the problem was to get the means to lead a joyous life, and the material given was nothing more substantial than

their own skill and ingenuity and the credulity or weakness of their fellow-creatures. Judging from what we read in the 'Repues Franches,' or 'Free Repasts,' a curious collection of doggerel verses, written probably by some disciple of Villon in memory of his master's glory, the students do not seem to have been restrained by conscientious or other scruples in devising rogueries and devices by which the penniless can obtain the necessities and luxuries of existence at the expense of other people. These tricks may not have been out of keeping with the manners of the times; but they were at least of more than doubtful character, and not unfrequently fell under the hands of justice, which does not always appreciate a good joke. M. Longnon has found out several details about Villon's first serious acquaintance with crime, and assigns 1455 as the probable date. Villon was standing on the steps of the Church of Saint-Benoit, talking to a priest and a woman named Ysabeau, when another priest came up, and, in a quarrel similar to that in which Kit Marlowe fell, Villon killed the priest with a stone. Villon then fled from Paris, and probably did not return until he obtained a letter of pardon from Charles VII. But most likely before this event Villon had got into difficulties about a love affair with a lady who turned out to be a coquette. She listened to his suit at first, encouraged him, and then rejected him. The poet retaliated, perhaps by some libellous and disgraceful ballad, or perhaps had recourse to some worse means of insult; the lady, however, appealed to the ecclesiastical authorities, and Villon was condemned to be whipped. That the sentence was executed is shown by his own testimony:—

J'en fus batu, comme à ru telles,
Tout nud

i.e. like clothes are beaten by washerwomen (*comme au ruisseau les toiles*). When this affair, which is related by Villon himself, took place, cannot be exactly fixed; but at any rate, after the death of the priest, Villon left Paris to escape justice, and met some curious characters on his way. Amongst others was Huguette du Hamel, Abbess of Pourras, or Port Royal, whom one can hardly believe to have been a predecessor of the saintly Angélique Arnauld. Villon met this lady at the house of Perrot Girard, a poor barber of Bourg la Reine, who combined the occupations of barber and hotel-keeper, and who was cruelly duped by the unscrupulous poet and the gay abbess in the manner described in the following lines:—

Qu'en son hostel de cochons gras
M'apastela une semaine;
Tesmoing l'abesse de Pourras,

In 1456, the year in which he wrote the 'Petit Testament,' Villon went to Angers, with what object was unknown until M. Longnon instituted his researches into the national archives. The object, it may now be stated, was to plan a burglary on the house of a wealthy priest. The plan, however, was discovered, and Villon and his associates vanished into the mysterious byways of wandering rascaldom, and it was not till 1457 that one of the accomplices—Guy—was caught. This 'fortis operator crochetingorum,' as the documents call him, was put to the torture, and his revelation of the truth probably furnished the authorities with some clue to the steps of Villon. At any rate, in 1457 we find the poet lodged in the cells of the Châtelet under sentence of death. It is supposed that Villon, with some half-dozen companions, had committed a highway robbery, but nothing certain has been found out about this affair. His companions were hanged, and while awaiting the same fate Villon composed one of his best pieces, the epitaph, in form of a ballad, commencing, 'Frères humains qui après nous vivez,' from which we quote one stanza about the gibbet, which, for its grim realism and pathos, might have come from the pen of Victor Hugo :—

La pluye nous a debuez et lavez,
Et le soleil dessechez et noirciz ;
Pies, corbeaulx, nous ont les yeux cavez,
Et arrachez la barbe et les sourcilz.
Jamais, nul temps, nous ne sommes rassis ;
Puis ça, puis là, comme le vent varie
A son plaisir, sans cesser nous charie.

During his trial, as has been ingeniously inferred from a passage in the 'Ballade de l'Appel de Villon,' the unfortunate poet went through the ordeal of the question by water, of which an interesting account is given by Paul Lacroix, under the heading 'Pénalité,' in his book on 'Mœurs, Usages, etc., au Moyen Age.' The prisoner, it appears, was placed on a stretcher and bound down with cords; the executioner then took the culprit by the nose and held the nostrils compressed until the exhausted lungs forced the lips open; then some nine litres of cold water were poured gradually down the throat of the victim, who was then considerably laid before a fire to dry. In the *question extraordinaire*, double the quantity of water was employed. After his condemnation Villon appealed to Parliament and got a respite. In the mean time Marie, the daughter of Charles d'Orléans, was born, and Villon composed a dainty little ballad on the occasion, which won for him the intercession of the father, and Parliament graciously commuted the sentence of death into that of banishment.

from Paris. After these events we lose all trace of Villon until the year 1461, when he again turns up in prison at Meung-sur-Loire, by order of Thibault d'Aussigny, Bishop of Orleans. What his offence was this time we have no means of determining; it was not, however, serious enough to deprive him of the favour and protection of his old protectors Charles d'Orléans and the Duke de Bourbon. In this prison, confined in a dungeon, and fed on bread and water—

une petite miche
Et de froide eau, tout ung esté—

Villon passed the weary months in writing sprightly verses, and in composing pathetic ballads of *bonne doctrine* to those of evil life. On the accession of Louis XI., who happened to pass through Meung in the autumn of 1461, the unhappy poet was released from his confinement, and set about writing the greater part of the 'Grand Testament.' In all probability Villon, in spite of broken health and a life of privation, lived several years after these events, but all conjecture as to the course of his life or the date of his death is worse than useless. Rabelais, in spite of chronology, brings Villon to the court of Edward V. of England, and makes him give a more than bold answer to that brave king, which will be found in the 67th chapter of Book IV. Again, in the 13th chapter of the same book, Rabelais says that in his old age Villon retired to St. Maixent in Poictou, under the patronage of the good abbé of the place, where, to amuse the people, he got up a Passion play in the dialect of the country. Though the evidence of Rabelais is far from incontestable, yet the story is not improbable, and it is pleasing to picture to ourselves the poor poet and quondam prince of Bohemians ending his troubled life in peace and tranquillity, and busying himself with amateur theatricals, by which means, perhaps, he had some time gained his bread. It is, indeed, believed that Villon gave dramatic representations at Paris, and it is in the character of the director of a troop of strolling players that legend sends him wandering through France and the Low Countries. After all we must be satisfied with mere conjecture as regards this period of Villon's life, especially as he became a sort of centre for all floating myths, and a foster-father to marvels and anecdotes which were wandering, masterless, from mouth to mouth, so that finally we are left in a state of wonder and admiration at the strange and incomprehensible mixture of a poet and a scoundrel, consummate in each department of his versatile activity.

II. When we think of the miseries and disgraces of such a

life as that which has just been described, we cannot fail to be struck by two things. First of all we observe that Villon's nature has escaped all taint of corruption. In the midst of the most abject mental and bodily distress he retains high and noble sentiments. He is full of respect and love for his mother and of gratitude to those who have helped him. He regrets the folly of his wasted youth, and, what is very noteworthy considering the period at which he lived, he loves his country. In his wonderful ballad of 'Dead Ladies' he was sufficiently in advance of many of his countrymen to recognise the glorious devotion of

Jehanne, la bonne Lorraine,
Qu'Anglois bruslèrent à Rouen.

Secondly, we observe that the circumstances of his life formed the talent of the poet. Brought up in the school of misery, Villon saw things as they were; allegory and euphuism were for him things of the past. At the time when Villon appeared French literature was at a period of transition from general and allegorical poetry to personal and individual poetry. It was a period when the feudal system was gradually becoming extinct, and when the period of history known as the Middle Ages was approaching its term. Catholicism and feudalism were about to give place to the Renaissance and the power of the people. In literature Villon took the place of the *trouvères*; the *basochiens* succeeded the old mystery players; and the eloquence of the pulpit abandoned courtly panegyric and scholastic elegance, and became plebeian in its style as it was democratic in its inspiration. In the poetry of Villon we have the last word of the Gothic spirit in all its strong individuality and delicate sweetness. We see what the French spirit could do before it was influenced by Italian subtlety and *finesse*. The poems of Villon, with their rough strength underlying a delicate clearness of expression, are, to the ingenious and ornate poems of Ronsard, what the old Gothic cathedrals are to the Château of Blois, or what the paintings of the Clouets are to those of their Flemish neighbours Hemling and the Van Eycks. The essential characteristic of Villon and of all Old French poetry—a characteristic which still distinguishes French art—is a striking neatness and precision of execution, an unconstrained elegance, and a lightness and almost ærial delicacy such as we see in a hundred Gothic carvings and traceries. The roughness and force, however, still remain. In Villon's work it is generally kept within bounds by his innate artistic spirit; but after Villon the rough element threatened to predominate—as, for instance, in the hard and unchastened pages of Rabelais—and the object of the literary efforts

of the Pleiad was to castigate this rough element. Ronsard doubled the French *netteté* by Italian *finesse*, and thereupon, to quote the words of Pater, 'nearly all the force and all the seriousness of French work disappear; only the elegance, the aerial touch, the perfect manner, remain.'

Of the three chief names which belong to this period—Charles d'Orléans, René d'Anjou, and François Villon—the last named is undoubtedly the greatest. He attained without effort that individuality and directness which his contemporaries never quite succeeded in reaching. His popularity, as we have already seen, has been almost without a break. Clément Marot prepared his edition of Villon by order of Francis I.; and though the members of the Pleiad could not, consistently with their principles, do otherwise than condemn the roughness and simplicity of Villon, after this brief interval the charm exercises its old influence. Rénier calls himself a humble disciple of Villon; Boileau assigns him his place in the following lines:—

[Villon] sut le premier
Dans ces siècles grossiers
Débrouiller l'art confus de nos vieux romanciers.

La Fontaine was his ardent admirer, and Voltaire his imitator. In our own days still more flattering justice has been done to Villon. Sainte-Beuve, Saint-Marc-Girardin, Nisard, Démogeot, and Gautier have all admitted his merits and eulogised his talents, while the laborious erudition of Germany has not failed to exercise its critical skill and indefatigable industry on the tangled web of the poet's life. Villon was indeed *the* poet of the fifteenth century who was the most skilled in the mechanism of poetic phraseology, and who knew best how to give it most flexibility and energy, and at the same time he was the most skilled master and almost the perfecter of rhyme. Not only was he the greatest poet of the fifteenth century, but he was also the first poet, in the true sense of the word, of modern France. 'Vu que c'est le meilleur poète parisien qui se trouve,' Clément Marot says in his preface. He was, in fact, a great and original soul, in which were combined most of the features of strength and weakness which characterise French literature of the present day. He is full of spirits, jests, humour, and joyousness, tempered with a genial philosophy of life. He is rarely serious for any length of time, but he always sustains his gravity long enough to awaken in us a sense of the soul's profoundness and mystery. His passion is rarely of great depth, but his pathos reveals what is particularly rare in the French nature—a true and genuine humourist. We

venture to quote the following little poem to justify some of our remarks:—

LAY ON 'PLUSTOST RONDEAU.'

Mort, j'appelle de ta rigueur,
Qui m'as ma maistresse ravie,
Et n'es pas encore assouvie,
Se tu ne me tiens en langueur.
Onc puis n'euz force ne vigueur;
Mais que te nuysoit-elle en vie,
Mort ?

Deux estions, et n'avions qu'ung cuer;
S'il est mort, force est que devie,
Voire, ou que je vive sans vie,
Comme les images, par cuer,
Mort !

Again, in reading Villon we are often surprised at discovering chords of sympathy with that feeling of disenchantment, that ever-present consciousness of the *vanitas rerum*, which is generally supposed to be the peculiar characteristic of the northern races. Surrey is amongst the earliest of our own poets whose bent is of this strongly serious and melancholy turn. One of Villon's pet subjects is the regret of faded beauty:—

Le front ridé, les cheveux gris,
Les sourcilz cheuz, les yeux estaintz,
Qui faisaient regars et ris.

Death and fading beauty is a theme which had an unconquerable charm for Villon, and, like Baudelaire, he has written of *les petites vieilles* who once were queens of hearts—

ces pauvres femmelettes
Qui vieilles sont et n'ont de quoy—

who, regretting their past beauty, ask Heaven why they were born so soon; but Villon quaintly says—

Notre Seigneur s'en taist tout coy,
Car, au tanser, il le perdroit.

The word *tanser* means 'to discuss,' 'to argue,' and the innuendo of the irreverent poet is sufficiently clear to need no further explanation.

The best of Villon's work consists of the ballads and *rondeaux* which are scattered throughout the 'Grand Testament' and 'Petit Testament.' Form and thought are united in them in the most perfect manner. The sentiment is often commonplace, and often

strange and *outré*, yet it is so picturesque and touching in its sincerity that we do not feel it jar upon us. Buffoonery is mixed up with gravity, emotion with raillery, melancholy with the fumes of the debauch, and the little cutting satire with which he winds up melts away before a touch of irresistible pathos. All this, too, passes so lightly and so gaily that we do not notice the exquisite skill of the poet until we begin consciously to analyse his work. An acute and sympathetic critic, M. de Montaignon, says: 'We must go to Rabelais to find another master who can be compared to Villon, and who writes French with the skill and instinct, with the purity and the imagination, with the delicate grace and strong directness, which one admires in Villon, and in the possession of which qualities he stands alone among his contemporaries.'

The pearl of Villon's works has unanimously been held to be the 'Ballade des Dames du Temps jadis,' with its melancholy and bewitching burden, 'Mais où sont les neiges d'antan?' This ballad has been translated in such a masterly manner by Mr. Dante Rossetti, that we cannot better conclude our account of Villon than by quoting two of the stanzas, and at the same time commending Villon to the careful and tender study of all who love poetry and humanity:—

Tell me now in what hidden way is
 Lady Flora the lovely Roman?
 Where's Hipparchia, and where is Thais,
 Neither of them the fairer woman?
 Where is Echo, beheld of no man,
 Only heard on river and mere,—
 She whose beauty was more than human? . . .
 But where are the snows of yester-year?

Where's Héloïse, the learned nun,
 For whose sake Abeillard, I ween,
 Lost manhood and put priesthood on?
 (From love he won such dule and teen!)
 And where, I pray you, is the Queen
 Who willed that Buridan should steer
 Sewed in a sack's mouth down the Seine? . . .
 But where are the snows of yester-year?

Nay, never ask this week, fair lord,
 Where they are gone, nor yet this year,
 Except with this for an overword,—
 But where are the snows of yester-year?

T. E. CHILD.

‘Drip ! Drip ! Drip !’

—S. T. COLERIDGE.

I

AMONG the horrid acts we read
Of Torquemada's Inquisition,
I recollect a cruel deed
Befitting any fiend's commission.
The trick was very simply done :
(True genius ever is adaptive!)
Mere water-drops fell one by one
Plump on the cranium of the captive.

II

'Twas quite refreshing first of all ;
The heated brain found solace in it ;
But soon the thing began to pall,
And made an age of every minute.
At length, to crown the dire effect
Of this eternal patter-patter,
A man of giant intellect
Became as mad as any hatter.

III

Within our gentler modern life
Such deeds could never find revival ;
Yet in my true and loving wife
Doth Torquemada boast a rival.
I never curse the cruel Fates
Who brought me down to this condition :
I doat on her who emulates
The late lamented Inquisition.

IV

For her I sacrificed my Club—
My pet resort—my seventh heaven
To her I've yielded up my Chubb,
And *must* be home before eleven.
I wear a pleased and placid grin,
And strive to clank my fetters gaily :
Open revolt would be a sin,—
But oh ! the drops are dropping daily.

V

She dreads tobacco—though the smell
Is innocent, physicians tell us ;
And, worst of all, (I know it well)
My lady is a little jealous.
Her fears are evidently vain,
For banished is my mild Manilla ;
The cook's exceptionally plain,
The housemaid is a she-gorilla.

VI

Long years have I endured the rack
From January to December.
One straw will break the camel's back,
But that must be the *last*, remember.
Not many more can I survive
Of paltry cares and petty trammels :
The end will very soon arrive ;
My back is weaker than the camel's.

HENRY S. LEIGH.

At a Japanese Watering-Place.

To Europeans the heat during the months of July and August in Japan is almost intolerable. Exercise must be taken before eight o'clock in the morning and after six o'clock in the evening, so that during the period between these hours the foreign settlements of Yokohama, Kobé, and Nagasaki present the appearance of cities of the dead.

Yokohama, from its peculiar position, is perhaps the most intolerable of the three, for on three sides ranges of hills effectually shut out what particles of breeze might be wafted from the distant mountain range of Oyama, and on the fourth spreads the broad, glittering expanse of the Bay of Yedo. No wonder, then, that as the sun scorches the eyes with the glare of apparently endless white buildings upon an apparently endless white, dust-clogged road; as the coolest of drinks refuse to soothe the palate; and as the very punkahs wave heavy warm air,—the foreign residents should during the aforesaid months make a general exodus to 'fresh woods and pastures new.'

The most popular of these summer refuges is the small village of Hakoné, situated amongst the mountains about forty-five miles from Yokohama. To approach Hakoné, a terrible flight of afflictions—terrible at least to the tourist fresh from the rapid means of conveyance, and the thousand and one conveniences of European travel—must be undergone. The railway is of no good, as its terminus is at Yokohama; the Tocaïdo, or great main road, sorely tries the nerves of the traveller and the stamina of the native ponies. Walking beneath this burning sun is entirely out of the question, and the sole means of conveyance is the 'jinrickisha,' or two-wheeled carriage, dragged by coolies. Moreover, European provisions are not to be procured so far up country as Hakoné, so that the traveller must lay in his stock for some days to come; have it sent beforehand to the pre-arranged tea-house, and leave word with his storekeeper to transmit in due course all further supplies. This must be done, assuming that tea-house accommodation has been procured, for during the exodus season every tea house in the little village of Hakoné has been engaged for weeks previously. And as foreign influences have not yet established there a giant hotel, the traveller must choose between two or three big houses, in which it is true much has been done to make 'roughing it' palatable, but which at the best are very rude homes for a sojourn of a month or six weeks.

However, granted that these difficulties have been overcome, that the supplies of bread (baked especially so as to keep fresh for some time), tinned meats, and liquor have been sent ahead, that a 'suite' of apartments—that is, a few square yards of space railed off by screens—has been secured, and that we are ready for the journey.

There is nothing to be described of the road between Yokohama and Odawarra—in the ancient palmy days of feudal Japan a thriving centre of commercial and political importance, now simply notable as being the point at which one really bids farewell to signs of western civilisation, and from which diverges the road to the mineral baths—that has not been described by writers on travel in Japan. The villages on the route are as well known to readers of Oriental travel as are the principal places of the 'Swiss Round' to students of Murray and Baedeker, so we will assume that the coolies—honest, willing slaves, resembling much the inhabitants of the mountain districts of Spain in their capabilities of doing a great deal of work upon very little sustenance—have pulled us the thirty-eight miles under the eight hours.

Beyond Odawarra no carriage can pass, for the very sufficient reason that the path—in courtesy termed a high road, in reality a succession of more or less evenly jumbled boulders—commences a by no means gradual ascent of some four thousand feet. Most tourists make this ascent in 'kagos' or baskets slung on the shoulders of trained coolies, but to enjoy the scenery thoroughly one should walk. We have left the plain, with its homely English-looking expanse of fields studded with brown-thatched farm-houses, and at every step the scenery grows wilder and more romantic; rugged lines of hills bound the view ahead; through the glens on each hand torrents foam and dash over their stony beds between banks of shrub-grown crags or along the feet of dense pine-woods; the only sounds that break the stillness are the sighing of the wind through the trees, the murmur of the waters, and the distant dull roar of the ocean on the sands of Odawarra bay. There is but little level ground in this district, and wherever a patch occurs there is certain to be found a picturesque little resting-place, with a seat of turf and a canopy of branches, where the traveller may rest for a few minutes, and, as he gazes over the panorama spread beneath him, sip cups of tea guiltless of sugar or milk. All is stiff, stern collar-work—a long plod over the vilest of paths up an apparently never-ending ascent. But how keen and fresh is the air! Down in the plain below they are simmering and sweltering *beneath the rays* of a tropical sun—here we are breathing pure, *uncontaminated* mountain air; air which at night time, even in

July, necessitates the use of the thickest coverings; air which is worth any amount of petty privation to breathe for a few weeks; air which will stave the doctor from our door for months to come.

The country folk are ever civil and obliging, and the days of swaggering, two-sworded roisterers have gone by, so that no fears need be entertained by the pedestrian on the score of interference, save—and it is an important saving clause—in the case of any insufficiency of passport. Be the document ever so minutely irregular, and no power, persuasion, or interest can prevent the European tourist from being ignominiously marched back to Yokohama in the convoy of native police. A lovely romantic walk of two hours brings the traveller to the top of the pass. Arriving as one generally does at the close of day, having started from Yokohama early in the morning, the first view of the Japanese Harrogate is simply enchanting. Standing under the quaint red portal of a rustic shrine dedicated to the rural fox-deity Inari-Sama, through the lattice-work of the pine-branches one catches a glimpse of the lake of Hakoné, sleeping in a nest of densely wooded hills. Along one shore of the lake stretches the line of brown-thatched houses composing the village, and looking as one does from an eminence, can be seen the folk in the street hurrying to bath-house or vespers. Far away, over an expanse of many-tinted woods, rises the grand solitary cone of Fujiyama, now all purple in the rays of the setting sun: to the right is the huge mountain gap, known to tourists as the O Tomi Togi, and on the left soar the twin peaks which mark the summit of the Hakoné pass, now as peaceful as a beautiful summer evening can make them, not many years ago the scene of much hard fighting between the troops of the old Emperor and those of the present Mikado. Descending the rough mountain road, and passing through avenues of gigantic trees which skirt the lake, the village is reached.

It is strange that at so sequestered and romantic a spot, in so mysterious and distant a country, should be reproduced on a small scale the scenes typical of an English watering-place during the season. Yet life at Hakoné, as passed by the health-seekers from Yokohama, has very little romance about it. To the solitary artist or explorer the charm is indescribable, but to the family man from Yokohama, with fashionable daughters and a large circle of acquaintance, except for the pure air and the relief from heat, life in Hakoné must be a dreadful bore.

The independent bachelor, purely on health-gaining or pleasure bent, knowing and caring for no one in the place, may dress as he likes, pass his time as he likes, and live where he likes. He

will perhaps be lodged in a couple of rooms—that is, a space consisting of so many mats divided into two by screens—in a farmhouse or in some tradesman's residence, or even in some old temple. The sunrise artillery of opening shutters, inevitable in a Japanese house, wakes him from his sleep, he dons the airiest of costumes, and starts for a plunge in the clear, cold, and, as the natives say, unfathomable waters of the lake. If he has been for any length of time a wanderer in Japan, he has probably learnt to exist on the food of the country, and to dispense with articles of European food, the transport of which is always a source of annoyance and anxiety to the traveller; and it really requires very little training to become accustomed to Japanese food. The only point at which the palate rebels is that of drink—the fermented essence of rice, drunk steaming hot, and resembling slightly in flavour diluted sherry of the one-and-threepence a bottle type, rarely finds favour with Englishmen. Moreover, it is a very rapid intoxicant, and is very bad stuff to work physically upon. But with the edibles very little fault can be found. The flesh of animals, until the settlement of Europeans in Japan, was utterly unknown as an article of food. Now, however, shops for the sale of beef and pork are very numerous in Yedo and Yokohama, and are said to be wonderfully patronised by the natives.

Fish and rice are the staple articles of food, and these, when artfully seasoned by edible seaweeds, vegetables, eggs, and fruits, form dishes at which no European epicure could with reason turn up his nose. At the large fashionable restaurants of the capital, if the traveller order a dinner on an unlimited scale purely *à la mode japonaise*, he must be prepared for a meal lasting over several hours, consisting of numberless courses, and composed entirely of these two articles, fish and rice. The very sweets with which the banquet opens are extracted from seaweed, and the side dishes and sauces made of eggs and vegetables are really the only 'plats' which are neither fish nor rice. In the country the traveller of course finds the *menu* more limited as to variety. But having learnt the use of chopsticks, and possessing a bottle or two of English beer, and not being squeamish in the consumption of raw fish, he may fare uncommonly well, and, what is as important, will find that at the end of a meal he is perfectly free from the heaviness and drowsiness too generally consequent upon a hearty repast of the European calibre. Having breakfasted, armed with a pipe, a stick, a sketch-book and a few shillings' worth of paper money, he may start for his day's ramble. If he be not a convert to Japanese food, at a very slight cost a coolie may be obtained, who will carry provisions for a day or two; and, with

Hakoné as his head-quarters, the independent bachelor may spend a most enjoyable fortnight in exploring the neighbourhood—even venturing so far as to make the ascent of the holy mountain Fuji, distant some twenty miles; in this case, however, he must be especially careful that his passport is in order, for if the Japanese are especially jealous about one subject more than another, it is their grand, lonely mountain.

Acting thus independently, untrammelled by etiquette and the petty exactions of society, the traveller will never regret having passed a short time at Hakoné. Walk as he may in any direction, pleasing subjects for his pencil, odd nooks and corners, little patches of the uncontaminated Japan of the romantic past, greet him at every turn of the road. If he be a sportsman, he will find amongst the simple rustics many a sturdy fellow willing to show him happy hunting grounds abounding with big and small game which have been accumulating ever since the days of feudalism, when the great lords of the neighbourhood, and not unfrequently the Emperor himself, were wont to hold great hunting festivals extending over several weeks, and which, thanks to the stringent regulations concerning sporting licences issued by the Government, have never been massacred wholesale by the ‘sportsmen’ of Yokohama; or he may pass a day of ‘dolce far niente’ with rod and line amongst the innumerable inlets and sequestered corners of the lake, sharing a rough tiffin with the boatman under the shade of some waterside shrine, and enjoying himself thoroughly, so long as he does not look for sport.

Very different, however, is life at Hakoné as passed by men afflicted with large families, and enjoying the reputation of being well known and respected members of the Yokohama community.

Paterfamilias, as he has ladies with him, must put up at one of the great tea-houses—in the olden time sober, respectable, dingy old inns enough, but now, alas! much altered, to suit the tastes of foreign visitors—at least, so think the enterprising proprietors. Every time he enters the tea-house his eye is afflicted with a staring address, rudely printed on a huge board suspended over the entrance, running somewhat in this style:—

GRAND HOTEL, HAKONÉ.

Great accommodation for English and Americans gentleman. All tongues they speak, and good beer sold by Mister Kikuchi.

The soft white mats are retained in that portion of the house set apart for domestic use, but in the rooms allotted to foreigners flimsy carpets are laid down, on which totter wooden constructions charitably presumed to be chairs and tables. The host himself is

attired from morn till night in what would not be a bad imitation of European evening dress, were it tolerably well fitting and passably clean, and insists on speaking at every opportunity, even to guests thoroughly acquainted with his own tongue, an extraordinary lingo of Anglicised French.

The waitresses, from long association with all sorts and conditions of foreigners, have none of the coyness and civility which are such marked characteristics of their sisters in less known hostelryes, but are impudent, slovenly, and can be, if occasion requires, very tolerably blasphemous, thanks to the influence which certain classes of Englishmen and Americans never fail to make felt whenever they travel in Japan. Worst of all, the charges are exorbitant, and everyone connected with the establishment has what is known as 'a very keen eye to the main chance.'

As Paterfamilias meets here all the Smiths and Browns of his Yokohama acquaintance, he must live as they do. He probably has brought his own Chinese cook, and the rickety tables nightly groan beneath extravagant viands and costly liquors very little in keeping with the homely, nay, mean appearance of the room and its furniture. He must dress as in Yokohama. To him the comforts of the collarless shirt, the light wide-awake, and the loose knickerbockers are denied, and he must descend to breakfast each morning in irreproachable costume; so that the poor man really finds that the change from Yokohama to Hakoné is but a difference without a distinction.

But if etiquette presses hard upon those of the sterner sex, how much harder is it upon ladies during these hot months! All, especially the Americans, vie with each other in the production and exhibition of sumptuous raiment; and as the fair-skinned daughters of the West sweep along the humble village street, daintily tripping with upheld skirts and the highest heeled of boots the most rugged of paths, the chubby, bronzed little Japanese women run to the cottage doors, and, questioning doubtless the similarity of sex, gape with wonder-struck eyes, afterwards turning away in peals of genuine laughter.

Calls are regularly made and received, tiffin and dinner parties given, and solemn expeditions of exploration formed to the various points of interest within an easy distance of the village. Nor are the spiritual wants of the little community left neglected, for the Saturday coach from Yokohama generally brings a missionary *en route* for the baths; and to the traveller passing perchance through Hakoné on a Sunday, very funnily does the sound of 'Hymns Ancient and Modern,' sung to the chords of a *harmonium*, contrast with the scene around.

Such is life at a Japanese watering-place. By many readers our account may be deemed too sweeping, for doubtless there are many who fly from the heat of Yokohama and enjoy their holiday in a rational way; but these are our experiences at Hakoné during three successive summers passed there, and we cannot deem them overdrawn. Although pleasure-seekers form the largest proportion of the visitors to the baths of Japan, there are many people who really go to be cured of their ailments, or at least to obtain temporary relief. These, however, do not patronise Hakoné. Half-way between Hakoné and Miyanoshta, another place of popular resort, are sulphur baths the exact counterpart of those at Harrogate in Yorkshire, and hither resort all the year round, from every part of Japan, the maimed and diseased. The scenes, however, to be witnessed in the open air every day are so revolting that the Japanese have been left masters of the situation, and foreigners combine the purchase of health with that of pleasure at other baths. The tea-houses are built over the springs, and the water may be seen in the bath-rooms bubbling up steaming hot from the earth; no amount of heat seems to affect the Japanese frame, accustomed as it is to be plunged daily into a tub of water almost at boiling heat, but in the case of foreigners the temperature must be considerably moderated,—hence, say the natives, the reason that so few foreigners are cured after a course of Japanese mineral baths.

No traveller visiting Japan should omit to visit its bath-villages. The air is of the purest, the scenery exquisitely romantic, and at a very slight expense of time, trouble, and money, a great deal that is vastly instructive and interesting may be seen. To the artist especially the greatest attractions are held out, whilst the student of Japanese habits and customs, so long as he steers clear of tea-houses of the before-described type, and does not mind a good share of rough living and hard work, may find in these mountain regions what he may look for in vain in other parts of the rapidly-changing Japan of to-day.

H. F. ABELL.

By Proxy.

BY JAMES PAYN.

CHAPTER V.

THE INFORMER.

DIFFERENT as the two Englishmen were in almost all particulars, they differed also in this, that Pennicuick, though he was much the stronger, and could keep awake night after night, if it were necessary, was a heavy sleeper; while Conway was a light one. The passing by of the first pilgrim on the paved towing-path the next morning awoke him, and he at once got up and looked about him. The first object his eyes rested on was Fu-chow, just stepping from the boat to shore.

‘Where are you going, captain?’

‘Topside-galow, much plenty walk before chow-chow.’

‘Not a bit of it; there is no time for going up hill. And as to chow-chow, we mean to take that with his Excellency the red-buttoned mandarin.’

He had produced his watch in corroboration of the first part of this statement, for an illustration is the best sort of language to all aliens; but the captain appealed to it as a witness on the other side.

‘One piecey hand look plenty time for chin-chin.’

‘Yes; but the other hand says No. You can chin-chin here just as well as at that blessed temple, and in short you sha’n’t go.

‘Chop-chop,’ pleaded Fu-chow, and moved his legs like Mr. Payne of pantomimic celebrity, to express rapidity of movement. ‘One young man walkey, no step.’

‘I don’t care how quick a young man can walk. We are going on with the boat at once.’

‘What is that dancing ape about?’ inquired Pennicuick, roused by the noise of the argument, and putting his head out of the shoreward cabin. Fu-chow skipped back into the boat with all the celerity of which he had just been boasting.

‘Oh, nothing,’ said Conway. ‘I am only telling him to move on, since we mean to breakfast with the mandarin.’

‘To be sure, with old red-button. He will give us “frogs and snails and puppy dogs’ tails,” no doubt; but what is enlargement of the liver compared with that of the mind?’ Then, with a supercilious

glance at the pilgrims: 'So all this Ay-tum-foo tomfoolery is beginning again, I see. What surprises me is the egotism of these idiots in each imagining that he possesses a soul.'

'Perhaps he does,' said Conway drily.

'Well, of course it is possible; but you must allow even in that case that it can't be possibly worth saving.'

Although it was almost certain that the mandarin to whom they had been recommended would presently ask them to breakfast (for, though by no means hospitable to strangers, the Chinese pay considerable attention to persons who have letters of introduction), the two Englishmen thought it prudent to take what is called a 'summer oyster.' Oysters are very plentiful in the Flowery Land in the proper season, and during the remainder of the year a substitute—thanks, we believe, to 'barbarian' ingenuity—has been discovered for them. The yolk of an egg is put into a wine-glass; a few drops of water and as many of vinegar are added, with salt and pepper. Then the recipient 'shuts his eyes and opens his mouth,' as in the nursery game of our childhood, and 'Heaven sends him,' or seems to send him, an oyster.

Pennicuck approved of this delicacy in his unenthusiastic manner, and appeared in better spirits than on the previous evening: he acknowledged that his temper had not been what it should have been on that occasion, which he attributed to being shut up in a horrid boat; and now that they were on their way again, he grew animated and full of talk. His quick eye roved hither and thither and found a theme for sprightly scorn wherever it fell; on the tea-farms that now began to sprinkle the banks, where every parasitic plant was 'Twining'; on the family tombs with their groups of pines or junipers ('there's another hearse and feathers'); on the blocks of granite cut into forms of gigantic animals, in imitation, as he affirmed, of the antediluvian department of the gardens of the Crystal Palace; and on the pagodas, the idea of which he maintained was derived from Kew. Presently glancing nearer home, he noticed that the number of soldiers in attendance upon them was diminished.

'There are but five men here, and there should be six,' observed he in a quick tone of anger.

'Fu-chow, how is this?' inquired Conway, who as usual saw no reason for such excitement. It had happened more than once that some of their guards had got out and walked beside the boat.

Fu-chow seemed to think that this was the case now; for he gazed earnestly along the footpath, as if expecting to see the truant following them, ere he replied: 'Man plenty dirtey, plenty wash.'

'He says the fellow has stopped to bathe,' explained Conway.

¹ A celebrated tea-firm in London is so called, Cousin Jonathan.

'He is a liar,' said Pennicuick grimly; 'they never wash—You, sir, come here.'

'Fu-chow came up close to the bunk that separated the two compartments, and stood face to face with his enemy. The contrast between the two men—typical as it was, too, of their respective races—was very remarkable: the European, unyielding, confident, and implacable; the Asiatic, dismayed, conciliatory, and full of guile.

'Do not strike him,' cried Conway quickly.

'I don't intend to do so,' answered the other. 'But if I do strike him I shall kill him. Please say to him that he had better tell the truth.' Conway had seen his friend in 'tempers' more than once; but never in one like this, which was all the more terrible because of its calmness. He himself was more than annoyed; he was indignant with Pennicuick, and made up his mind that this sort of thing should cease, or he would return to Shanghae alone, and leave his companion to get on without him as he could; but for the present he restrained himself, for he knew that the captain's life was in danger.

'See here, Fu-chow, my friend is displeased because you have told him a lie. He says he will cut your pigtail off if you tell him another.' For the first time the Chinaman lost colour; the red faded from his cheek and left it yellow. To lose his pigtail would have been far worse than to lose life itself, and this 'white devil' was capable of any extremity of outrage.

'I ask once more, where is that soldier gone?' said Pennicuick. Fu-chow understood the question as though it had been addressed to him in the purest accent of Pekin.

'Young joss pidgeon man went to chin-chin at morning time.'

'He says the soldier is a pious young fellow, and went off to the temple when we started,' explained Conway; 'he will rejoin us, no doubt, at the mandarin's, where he knows we are to stop.'

Pennicuick nodded as if satisfied, and Fu-chow assumed his usual post at the extreme fore part of the boat, of which he formed as it were the figure-head.

At the same moment there fell on the clear air the distant sound of a great bell tolled with rapidity and at unequal intervals.

'What is that, Connie?' inquired Pennicuick, with an unusual display of interest.

'I suppose it is the great bell at the temple; we heard it yesterday, though it is true not rung so irregularly. Perhaps a part of those five pounds of yours has gone in drink to the ringers.'

Pennicuick smiled, not very pleasantly ; that piece of extravagance was perhaps a sore subject ; or perhaps his eye resting for the moment on Fu-chow, caused him to show his teeth.

More tombs, more tea-farms, more pagodas, and presently a villa residence on the riverside, which would have astonished a Thames tourist, accustomed though he is to various styles of architecture. Imagine a Swiss cottage, painted very brightly, and with gilt bells hanging from the verandahs, that shone in the sun and tinkled in the breeze : in front a garden with grottoes and fishponds ; on one side, and a little to the rear, what in England would have been a coach-house and stables, but was in this instance a 'Hall of Ancestors,' where the memory of one's great-grandfather was a never-tiring subject of devotional exercise. On the other side of the villa a similar range of buildings, the 'Hall of Education,' or, as we should say, the schoolroom, where the children of the proprietor take in Confucius with their mothers' milk. This was the residence of Twang-hi, the mandarin.

The boat was pulled ashore and one of the soldiers despatched to his Excellency, bearing the Englishmen's credentials : the letter of introduction from their Shanghae acquaintance, and a piece of cardboard of bright vermilion, eight inches long by four wide, which was Conway's visiting card. His name was on the centre, and in one corner, in Chinese, the words, 'Your stupid younger brother bows his head in salutation.'

'Well, I don't like children,' observed Pennicuick frankly, 'but to call these people children is to pay them far too high a compliment. Does the fool who lives in this gimcrack edifice—the proper place of which is at the top of a twelfth-cake—wear a peacock's feather, I wonder ?'

'Certainly not ; that is reserved for even greater men. He boasts of the red button only.'

'Then he is not allowed to swallow gold-leaf when the Emperor grants his gracious permission to him to die ?'

'I am not sure, but I think he can only strangle himself with a silken cord,' answered Conway gravely. 'Now, whatever you do, Penn, when we come into this gentleman's presence, don't you laugh—see, here is his master of the ceremonies.'

Down the steps of the gimcrack villa, like an actor out of a stage castle a trifle too small for him, was seen descending a solemn personage, with a wand in his hand, and a similar address card, only a trifle bigger, to that which had been handed in. He was attired in a blue dressing-gown, so full in its make as almost to give a suspicion of crinoline, and wore upon his head a sort of inverted *butter-dish*, which wobbled as he moved. As he drew near

the boat, he shook his own hands with cordiality, and then placed them reverently on his stomach.

‘My master,’ said he, ‘is doubtful whether he shall presume to receive the trouble of your honourable footsteps.’

‘Confound him! then he won’t give us any breakfast,’ observed Pennicuick, when this sentence had been translated to him.

‘Hush! hush! that is only his form of invitation,’ explained Conway. ‘Tell the great Twang-hi, whose reputation reaches beyond the seas, that we crave permission to look upon him.’

This reply was evidently expected, as with a profound obeisance the master of the ceremonies moved his wand and marched before them towards the mansion, like a drum-major at the head of a regiment.

As they drew near the house, they perceived a number of paper lanterns hanging from the eaves of the verandah, each inscribed with the name of the proprietor; and, on the triple door being set wide, Twang-hi himself seated at the end of the entrance-hall. He was a man barely of middle age, but endowed with great gravity of demeanour, though, as Pennicuick thought, by no means with more than was needed to carry off his gown of office, with the tablets of the law worked on the breast, his necklace of huge beads that descended below his middle, and his mandarin’s hat with the red button conspicuous on its summit, exactly like a dish-cover with its knob.

He rose on the approach of his guests, with a ‘Tsing-tsing!’ (‘Hail! hail!’), then addressed Conway, who, he seemed to divine at once, was the one endowed with talking powers.

‘What is your honourable age?’

‘My worthless number is about five-and-forty.’

‘Does the venerable man enjoy happiness?’

‘My father is happy, I trust; being in the abodes of the blessed.’

For the moment Twang-hi showed some symptoms of embarrassment. He had concluded from his visitor’s age that his father was alive, and by this mistake had perhaps awakened sorrowful memories. Conway therefore at once came to the rescue by asking in his turn: ‘Is your honourable wife living?’

‘The mean person of the inner apartment is still in life,’ was the uncomplimentary but conventional reply.

‘How many worthy young gentlemen have you?’

‘Fate has been unpropitious to me in that particular. I have but one *bug*.’

‘He is, however, doubtless doing credit to your Excellency in his education.’

'I believe that the lazy little beggar has learned a few characters.'

Thus they continued for several minutes, each one underrating himself and his own possessions, while exaggerating the importance of everything pertaining to the other; and then pipes and coffee were brought in. With these came several attendants, each of whom performed a different sort of obeisance, corresponding to his position in the household. There are no fewer than eight gradations of salutation, from the mere clasping of the hands to the knocking the head nine times upon the floor, so that there was a good deal of pantomimic action. To Conway's great relief, this seemed to have no effect upon the risibility of his friend, who indeed was looking very grave. His hearing, like his other physical senses, was especially acute, and certain sounds of shouting and tumult without had reached him. Presently the number of the attendants in the room became augmented; among them were some of the soldiers from the boat, but there were also other soldiers.

The mandarins in China, as Conway was aware, have no 'business hours,' as we term them, but are subject at any time to have the claims of justice urged upon them; therefore the sudden appearance of two police officials followed by their myrmidons did not occasion any alarm to him. Pennicuick, on the other hand, grew, not alarmed, indeed—for to fear he might with truth be said to be a stranger—but suspicious of danger. He maintained an air of politeness, but his stern face grew dark, and he mechanically pushed his chair back to the wall.

With a wave of his hand, as if to bespeak his visitors' pardon for his momentary neglect of them, the mandarin turned slowly to the foremost police official, who addressed him with an excitement very unusual; for an inferior in China is to his superior always respectful, even to the very carriage of his pigtail. It was plain that something had happened to override even the national regard for ceremony.

So rapidly did the man speak, that Conway was unable to gather any sense from his words except that it was some sort of accusation, and his astonishment was great indeed on seeing the mandarin suddenly turn round and point towards his friend. At the same moment, as if in obedience to the signal, he saw Fu-chow emerge from the crowd, with several soldiers, and make a rush at Pennicuick. Quick as thought, the latter leapt from his seat and drew a revolver from his pocket; the next instant Fu-chow, for certain, would have been sent to Hades, and in all probability the mandarin after him, had not Conway, with a warning cry of 'Madman! what would you do?' struck the muzzle of the weapon upwards,

so that the bullet buried itself harmlessly in the roof of the apartment. Before Pennicuick could recover himself, a dozen men were on him, and he was disarmed and thrown upon the floor. A soldier on either side of Conway had also seized each an arm, though he made no sign of resistance.

‘We are Englishmen, Twang-hi,’ he exclaimed in a loud voice, ‘and claim the protection of our flag.’

‘If what I have just heard is true,’ returned the mandarin, ‘the Son of Heaven himself could scarcely protect yonder wretch. He has committed a sacrilege more impious than has yet entered into the brain of man to execute.’

‘This is some terrible mistake or lying charge, your Excellency.’

‘Mistake!’ cried the mandarin in a tone of horror; ‘look yonder!’

Conway looked, and beheld the treacherous Fu-chow holding in his open palms, with a mixture of malignant joy and superstitious reverence, a shining something, like the drop of a chandelier.

‘It is the sacred Shay-le of Buddha, O barbarian devil!’ continued Twang-hi, ‘that your comrade has stolen from its ten-thousand-year-old shrine.’

‘It is impossible!’ cried Conway, in tones almost as horror-stricken as those of the other; for he well knew the heinous nature of such an outrage in Chinese eyes, and also its consequences. ‘I saw him place it round his neck last night,’ put in Fu-chow, ‘and have just taken it from thence with my own hands.’

‘O Pen, is this true?’ cried Conway in a tone of agony,—‘that you took away the Shay-le?’

‘Yes, it’s true enough,’ returned Pennicuick, speaking with some difficulty from the number of Chinese upon his chest, but still with a certain characteristic scorn. ‘I was a fool to do it, of course, and I am sorry for it; but not half so sorry as that you made me miss that whey-faced scoundrel Fu-chow with my first barrel.’

Not a syllable of this, of course, was intelligible to those who heard it, except that Fu-chow caught the sound of his own name. As he did so, the same look of vindictive fury came into his face that Conway had noticed in it on that night when the captain had played the spy.

‘You would not turn traitor, surely, and destroy those who have fed you?’ pleaded Conway desperately.

‘No,’ said Fu-chow slowly; ‘only, the guilty must needs be punished. His Excellency here, as my father the mandarin has informed me, is one whose justice never fails. I will tell him you are a good man; how you defended my daughter from this devil, and



HE WAS DISARMED AND THROWN UPON THE FLOOR.

have twice saved my life from him ; and how you revere Buddha, and know nothing of this vile and impious sacrilege.'

'And yet it was my friend, and not I,' urged Conway, 'whose hand has fed you.'

'Ay, and struck me,' whispered Fu-chow fiercely, and touching for an instant his scarred cheek. 'See, yonder, what he has taken, and reckon what he is like to pay for it.'

He pointed to the family altar, erected, as usual, in the hall, and on which by this time a priest from the temple had placed the missing Shay-le with every demonstration of reverence. The faces of all the spectators, including even those of the soldiers who had just been employed in binding Pennicuick's limbs with ropes, expressed a superstitious awe.

'How much shall I get for this, as they say at the Old Bailey, Connie?' inquired the prostrate Pennicuick, taking advantage of the solemn silence ; 'I suppose that friend of yours—whom you will do me the justice to say I always took for a scoundrel—will tell us as much as that.'

Conway murmured a few words to the captain, who answered in the same low tone, but with a look which fortunately Pennicuick could not see.

'You will be fined and perhaps imprisoned, he says,' answered Conway cheerfully.

It was an effort for him to speak with hope, for what the captain had hissed into his ear was this : 'As sure as that is the Shay-le of Buddha, he will be cut into ten thousand pieces.' Such is in China the punishment invariably inflicted on those who commit sacrilege, as Conway was well aware ; but no less did the corroboration of the fact from Fu-chow's lips cost him a shudder. Far from European aid, and in the heart of a hostile and superstitious people—even had he had no personal enemy to urge the law upon its cruel course—Ralph Pennicuick was surely doomed.

CHAPTER VI.

THE GARDEN AT RICHMOND.

WELCOME everywhere as is the spring, it is nowhere hailed with more genuine satisfaction than in the outlying neighbourhoods near London, where so many families reside in reality to be spared the London rent, but professedly because the country is 'so delightful,' or 'so much more healthy for the dear children.' As for the healthiness, that is a matter to be settled between the Registrar-General (who holds a different opinion) and themselves ; but as to the delightfulness, we believe that under cross-examination they

will withdraw that statement except as regards the summer months. From October to March there is not a man whose house is thus located, and whose business or pleasure lies in town, that does not, rising early in the morning, curse his fate; and again, when immaturely leaving some hospitable roof, or the theatre before the play is finished, because he has to 'catch the train.' This difficult feat has to be accomplished, so often, and at such inconvenient hours, and in such winds, and snows, and rains, that a hundred times he vows that, as soon as he can get that hateful suburban mansion off his hands, he will come and dwell in Piccadilly. His wife and daughters too, during his absence the whole day in town, find Twickenham or Richmond, Hampton or Norbiton, as the case may be, excessively dull; especially so as regards the young ladies, since all the young gentlemen go off to town with their elders, and leave these localities in the same state as the cities of old, which a general levy of the nation in the field has left guarded only by women and children, and a few quite 'ineligible' old fogies. This is the invariable state of things during the winter; but with the return of spring the young men return from town by earlier trains for a row on the river, and other country joys, in which ladies can partake. Paterfamilias, too, finds getting up 'with the lark' no longer a fiction, and appreciates that bird's society; and in the evening, after the din and smoke and toil of London, takes kindly to the green earth and budding trees, and likens the family garden at home, however small, to that of Eden. Some of the gardens are very small indeed. Let us introduce the reader to one of them, with an apology for the scantiness of the accommodation. It is situated at Richmond, not by the river-side, where gardens are large and houses costly, but somewhere near the old church in the back part of the town, of which fashionable London frequenters of the 'Star and Garter' and the 'Castle' know nothing at all. It is a quiet old-world locality, the inhabitants of which should be by rights (if appearance has rights) reduced gentlefolks, or at the worst 'decayed' clergy. It is dull, but not dreary; comfortable, though cheap; and has certain picturesque features of its own, not of the tumbledown sort, born of absolute decadence, but which belong to genteel old age, and the absence of a vulgar flush of ready money. There are no fountains and fishponds, nor any of those pocket conservatories which attach themselves to the side of our brand-new villas as if they were being treated for pleurisy—with blisters; the gardens are long strips of greensward, not very much broader, some might scornfully say, than the strips of carpet rolled forth from the portals of town mansions on ball nights to save white satin shoes from contact with the pavement; but they are

green in spring-time nevertheless, and often boast a crop of daisies, that outshines all the patterns of the upholsterers. They are quite private too, being shut in by high brick walls of very old standing, whereon are trained peach-trees and pear-trees, which, though seldom giving any account of themselves such as would be received in Covent Garden, bear here and there a cherished fruit or two, which is reserved by the proprietor for great occasions, and de-scanted on as 'home-grown.'

In one of these gardens, on the selfsame spring morning, as it happens, on which Arthur Conway, thousands of miles away, is paying with his friend that fatal visit to the mansion of his transparency Twang-hi, his daughter Nelly is sitting before an easel, in front of her mother's house; she is painting a picture of it in water-colours for her far-away father, whose artistic talent and something more she has inherited, and she calculates that it will reach him, some three months hence or so, upon his birthday. He has never seen the house; for when he left his wife and child, years and years ago, they were in lodgings in London, where they had continued to live on until lately, when some slight change for the better in his circumstances enabled them to remove to Richmond. To what that change was owing Nelly does not know, nor even does her mother. Papa is reticent about such matters. He is always poor, but sometimes a little less so than at others; and then the wife and child at home, or 'his belongings,' as he lightly calls them, always derive advantage from it. The quarterly cheque to Mrs. Conway has another twenty pounds in it, and Nelly gets some pretty ornaments from China to wear in her bright brown hair or around her shapely neck, which sets her thinking what this dear distant papa is like, whom she has not seen since she was a little child, but who never forgets her. The cheque sometimes comes to her mother without a letter, but for herself there are always some loving lines by the China mail that fill her with unuttered yearnings. The subject of her father is not one upon which her mother encourages her to speak. That there is 'nothing absolutely wrong' about papa, she is well convinced, but she also knows that mamma and he are not quite in accord. This gives her affection for him a tinge of sorrow, which does not, however, abate it. She has been told by some of her father's friends that she is the 'very image of him,' but that does not help her much towards picturing him to herself. He cannot, for example, be only a few inches more than five feet high; wear brown hair in masses about his forehead, and in a heap at the back of his head; have hands so ridiculously small that he is obliged to ask for his gloves as 'first child's size' instead of any number known to adults; all which are among the personal cha-

racteristics of 'his image.' Were Nelly inclined to be vain, which is not the case, she might have given a more favourable description of herself. She is small, it is true, but light and bright as a fairy. How that little head, set so airily on its slender neck, can carry such a harvest of gold-brown hair, awakens wonder; her brown eyes, too, are very large for her face, giving almost the impression of one of those charming initial letters which magnify the female graces in 'Punch;' though, after all—as one looks at them—who would have them smaller? Softer and brighter they could not be; if you borrowed a pair of any bird to prove it, and placed them beside Nelly's, you would own yourself in the wrong. As sweetly as any bird, whom heartless man has robbed of sight to make its song more ravishing, does Nelly sing; and here, too, is a wonder how so frail a body can trill forth such far-sounding melodies as are now filling the spring air around her. When she works alone with her brush or pencil, it is her habit so to sing; and the two occupations harmonise together like the voice and the instrument.

'My dear Nelly, I do hope you are not putting your paint-brush in your mouth,' exclaimed an agitated female voice, and at the same moment an elderly lady appeared at the top of the little flight of steps that led down from the dining-room window to the garden. As Nelly was in full song at the time, the question appeared a little superfluous, but she hastened to reply to it nevertheless.

'No, mamma, dear; I hope I gave up that practice once for all when Mrs. Wardlaw bought me my first "grown-up" paint-box, nearly five years ago.'

'My dear child, it feels very cold,' resumed Mrs. Conway, with a lady-like little shudder; 'there is nothing so treacherous as these warm days in early spring, as you will come to know when you have lived as long as I have, and got the sciatica through sitting out in them. I think you had much better paint indoors.'

'But, my dear mother, I can't paint the outside of the house from the inside,' returned Nelly, laughing. 'Now, do come down and see how I am getting on.'

Mrs. Conway frowned, not that she was at all annoyed, but because she always did frown when invited to do anything. It was her standing protest against the unsatisfactoriness of life and all its acts, of the world and all its ways. Like her daughter, she was small, though by no means slight, and doubtless had been at one time a pretty piquant little woman, though never, like her, of the spiritual sort; but years and cares had furrowed her brow, and set their marks upon her generally. Her light eyes, from being constantly thrown up in astonished repro-

bation, had assumed a permanent position of amazement, though still capable of further movement in the same direction. If annoyed, thwarted, or astonished—to all three of which conditions of mind she was very prone—her hands and eyes flew up together, like those of a mechanical doll; only, it was not necessary to press any particular spring, for she was all spring.

Her complexion was very fair and good, and she would have looked comparatively young, but for those furrows and for the wrinkles about her mouth, where a painful smile was working (for you couldn't call it playing) in sign that for all that had come and gone to her in the way of sorrow, and for all the unsatisfactoriness of the scheme of creation, she was, thank Heaven, still cheerful. But it was no more like real cheerfulness than a gas-fire is like one of wood or coal. Her father, a plain blunt man, with a turn for drollery, used to say of her when a child, that she had got 'the Toos.' She was always too hot or too cold, or the weather was; and all about her were too hard, or too rude, or too unsympathising; and she never forgave him that little joke, though it was greatly appreciated by the rest of the family. The poor man went to his grave, she was wont to say, without ever knowing what his poor daughter suffered; which, so far as any particular ailment was concerned, was certainly true. If she had ever heard of the poet's advice to 'suffer and be strong'—which she had not—she would have retorted that 'it was all very well for a great rough man like him, but she would just like to see him trying to bear for half an hour what she had had to bear all day and every day of her life, not to mention her nervous headaches. Nobody could call her repining who knew the meaning of words; but any other poor creature in her position would be sorely tempted to inquire why such misfortunes befell *her*, who had really not the physical strength to endure them.' Mrs. Conway was really a kind-hearted good woman, and yet men had been known to say that, if there was no other woman in the world, they could never have married her: but this was after the days of her piquant prettiness had passed away; during that time she had had wooers enough, for in addition to her personal charms she had had some trifling attractions in the three per cents, though, to do her (and him) justice, they had weighed as nothing with Arthur Conway. Speculations as to what on earth could have induced this or that man to marry this or that woman are always idle when indulged in twenty years after the catastrophe. In this case it was only certain that Mrs. Conway still had her virtues; and among them this important one, that she had done her duty by her child. It is easier perhaps to be a good mother than a good wife; but, at all

events, Nelly and her mamma were not only united by a bond of the most genuine affection, but—which does not always happen, even under those favourable circumstances—‘got on’ together perfectly well.

The eddies and ripples upon the surface of her mother’s character, perplexing and misleading as they were to superficial observers, did not hinder the girl from seeing the clear pure stream that ran below them; and, moreover, she had discovered, what scarcely anyone else suspected, that, although strangely deficient in what is very properly called common sense, her mother was possessed of an intuitive sagacity that shone forth on occasion with great keenness, though it lay for the most part in the scabbard of disuse.

‘Well, mamma, dear, what do you think of it?’ inquired Nelly, when Mrs. Conway had stood regarding her picture for some moments, with her hand over her eyes, and her head on one side at the critical angle.

‘Well, it’s like the house, of course; indeed, I should know it almost anywhere: it strikes me, however—though it’s only my opinion, which goes for nothing, of course,—that it is rather out of the perpendicular.’

‘Nay, that’s not a matter of opinion, but of fact, mamma; here’s the ruler; now, if you place it along the line here, you will see it’s as straight as can be.’

‘I only meant that the copy differed from the original, my dear; it is the house that’s out of the perpendicular, that’s all,’ observed Mrs. Conway confidently.

‘Indeed, I hope not, mamma,’ said Nelly, laughing; ‘because you know we have got a lease of it.’

‘And nothing more likely, my dear, than that it should come down before the time expires. These old houses often do. However, I had no choice in the matter; I never have.’

‘You don’t regret coming here, dear mamma, I hope,’ said Nelly, with a gravity which I am afraid was not wholly genuine. ‘I am sure it was very nice of papa to get us out of those dreary London lodgings. I do hope he will be pleased with this picture of our new home, and that it will come as a little surprise to him very near his birthday; perhaps upon the very day.’

‘Well, that will depend upon the mails, my dear,’ observed Mrs. Conway with sudden stiffness. ‘And as to a surprise, how can there be anything of the sort when your father knows we are here?’

‘I merely meant as far as the present goes, mamma.’

Then there was the little silence that follows upon the introduction of an unwelcome topic.

‘Well, I hope you won’t spoil your things, Nelly, with these horrid paints,’ observed Mrs. Conway presently. ‘Oil never comes out, remember, and that is the only spring dress I can afford you this year.’

‘I will be very careful, dear mamma. It isn’t oil, however; it is a water-colour drawing.’

‘My dear, it’s paints, and that’s the point; as for its being a water-colour, as you call it, and at the same time a drawing—that is ridiculous.’

‘It is the name that it always goes by in art, mamma.’

‘Very likely, my dear; I only observed that it was ridiculous.’

And if all the members of the Royal Academy, including its associates, honorary lecturers, and the chaplain, had been collected together in that back garden, Mrs. Conway would have still maintained her opinion.

‘I suppose we shall see nothing of Mr. Raymond Pennicwick now that we have come out of town,’ continued she, after a pause.

‘Well, mamma, we have only been here a week, and he is working hard at Lincoln’s Inn, you know. It can scarcely be expected that he can look in upon us at Richmond so often as when we were in Gower Street.’

‘I did not say anything about “so often,” my dear. To-day is Saturday, when even the humblest clerk is given a half-holiday; and Raymond is his own master, and could come if he chose. Not that I want him, goodness knows. If he feels no wish to visit us—if he forgets that when he was an orphaned child I was a second mother to him—let him stop away.’

‘He was not an orphan, surely, mamma,’ said Nelly, smiling.

‘Now, that’s what I call hair-splitting,’ returned Mrs. Conway quickly. ‘He was worse than an orphan; for a man that has a bad father is more to be pitied than one who has none. The child was utterly neglected. I don’t believe Ralph Pennicwick cared one fourpenny-piece whether it lived or died. But there, men are all alike; self, self, self is all they think about from the cradle to the grave.’

‘Oh, mamma, I cannot believe that!’

‘Of course not; I didn’t believe it myself when I was your age, but I have come to learn it by experience. You imagine, I dare say, that Raymond, for example, is a high-principled, unselfish, dutiful young gentleman; and I grant he seems all that. But a woman can no more judge of a man’s character before she marries him, than you can tell how a house is furnished by looking at the outside walls. Seeing that it’s our first Saturday in our new house, and that we know none of our neighbours except Mrs.

Wardlaw, one would think it would be only common civility in Raymond to run down. But, no; it is too fine a day to waste on that, especially when the whitebait season has just begun at Greenwich—my goodness gracious, there's the front-door bell! Now, you mark my words, that's Mrs. Wardlaw. She has come to lunch; and we have nothing in the house but that cold leg of lamb, and the mint sauce thrown away by that idiot Jenny.'

'I don't think that will much distress Mrs. Wardlaw, mamma,' said Nelly quietly.

'Ah, that shows how little you are acquainted with human nature; you imagine that because she was not brought up, as I have been, to all the delicacies of the season, she won't miss her mint sauce. But not a bit of it; she'll say to Perkins, "Mint sauce," as naturally as, when cold beef is before one, you would say, "Mustard, Perkins;" and then Perkins will look at me, and I sha'n't know where to look; or as likely as not she will blurt out, "Please, marm, it's all throw'd away." I must say it's very inconsiderate of Mrs. Wardlaw—— Law, bless me, it's Raymond! Why, my dear boy, who *would* have thought of seeing *you*!'

'Well, I should have hoped *you* would, Mrs. Conway,' answered a cheery voice. 'It surely required no great gift of prophecy to foretell that out of Lincoln's Inn, upon the last day of the week, being a holiday, should come one who useth the pen and wasteth the ink, even unto Richmond. Forgive my Eastern imagery, but our chief is engaged in the great case of *Ramchunder versus Jeejeebhoy*! and we are all—— May I come down?'

'Stop, sir!' cried Nelly, as Mr. Raymond Pennicuick, a very handsome young gentleman of nineteen or twenty, stood salaaming in oriental fashion at the top of the steps. 'First tell us whether you can eat cold lamb without mint sauce for luncheon?'

'My dear Nelly, there is nothing that I could not eat—and I may even add drink—this morning, for I have walked every step of the way from London; I am STARVING.'

'There, mamma,' cried Nelly, 'that will be a relief to your mind——' But Mrs. Conway had already vanished, on hospitable thoughts intent, into the kitchen department; and the two young people were left under the necessity of making themselves agreeable to one another.

CHAPTER VII.

A BARGAIN RATIFIED.

RAYMOND PENNICUICK was dark like his father, but without his stern and almost truculent expression. His eyes were not black,

but hazel; and, in place of that astonishing black beard his father wore, he had a slight moustache and a smooth chin. The people who called the elder 'hard Pen,' sometimes called the younger 'soft Pen;' not that he was weak and yielding, but because he was gentle and conciliatory. His behaviour as a son, too, was exemplary; and, since it is by no means fashionable to be filial, this was set down by some to want of strength of mind. As a matter of fact, Raymond had a good deal of independence of character, though mitigated in expression by a strong sense of duty as respected his parent, and by the gift of charity as regarded others. It was this latter quality which had won him the esteem of Mrs. Conway, whose recent denunciation of him Nelly had set down at its just value. She had not even taken the trouble to defend him against her mother's accusations, which were like the charges of a pet goat, made in wilfulness and not in malice. At that very moment she was assisting Jenny in the basement story to cook a sweetbread for her favourite.

'What a charming picture, Nelly! But, dear me—it will be finished too late.'

'Why, you don't even know, you silly boy, for what it is intended!'

'Why, of course, for exhibition at the Royal Academy. And to-day is closing day.'

'Raymond, you're a tease. This picture is intended, sir, for a birthday present for somebody.'

'Dear, dear, I am so sorry to have precipitated matters. I had no notion you were intending anything so kind. It happens on June 4, you know—same day as that of George III., which is curious and interesting. But now I know of it, you may just as well give it to me as soon as it is done. It is for me, is it not, Nelly?'

'It certainly is *not*, sir; nothing was further from my intention. The picture is for dear papa; it will go out on the 14th of this month, and reach him, I hope, just in time. Don't you think it will please him?'

'If it doesn't, I'll take it off his hands,' answered Raymond, regarding it with admiration. 'It pleases *me* uncommonly.'

'Yes; but you are not an artist as he is, and, in short, know nothing about it.'

'That's quite true, dear; yet somehow one feels what's good. There will be scores of pictures of old red-brick houses, in sunny gardens, at the exhibition this year, which will not please me so well as this; which will only please me, perhaps, because they are like this.'

Nelly stepped back a pace or two from her easel, and executed a curtsey down to the very ground.

‘Spare my blushes, sir; you overwhelm me quite.’

‘I did not mean a mere empty compliment, Nelly,’ answered the young man gravely. ‘Everything done by those little hands of yours is dear to me.’

‘That takes the gilt off the criticism though, Mr. Raymond,’ answered Nelly steadily.

‘Well, I confess I can’t criticise in your presence. I can only admire. You say “spare my blushes;” but I can’t spare one of them. I can’t, indeed.’

‘My dear Raymond, I think you are mistaking the day,’ said Nelly gravely. ‘It is not February 14; and it’s not the 1st of April.’

‘No; April-fool’s day is past, but I am not the less a fool on that account. I *know* I’m a fool to expect any such happiness to befall me as I have now in my mind. Still, I must tell you what it is that I dare to hope, though I think you can guess.’ He had taken her by the hand and led her gently to the bottom of the little garden, out of earshot of anyone in the house.

‘I am not a good hand at guessing, Raymond,’ answered she; ‘and as for your hope—I am sure you will say nothing to pain me; and it would pain me very much if you asked for anything I could not give.’

She wore no blushes now. Her fairy face had lost all its bloom, and looked so exquisitely delicate, with here and there a faint blue vein, as to remind you of Shelley’s Lily of the Vale:

Whom youth makes so fair and passion so pale,
That the light of its tremulous bells is seen
Through its pavilions of tender green.

But except for her paleness there was no token of passionate love. Her look was firm, her eyes were resolute: it was only her tone that was tender, though that was steadfast too.

‘You can give me what I am about to ask, if you will, Nelly.’ She stood quietly in front of him without reply. If he must speak, he must, and she must hear him. But her answer was ready, and he knew, or ought to know, what it needs must be. She had been apprehensive of late of the very question (for she well knew what it was) that he was about to put, and had done her best to avoid it. She had striven to show him, by her frankness and freedom from constraint, that they were brother and sister yet, as they had always been; but her very precautions (as she had thought them) *had, it seemed, only fanned his flame.*

'We have known one another for all our lives, dear,' he began in a tremulous tone that betrayed the weight of feeling with which it was freighted; 'we have loved one another all our lives—or at least *I* have loved *you*—as children together, as boy and girl, as man and woman. There has never been a thought of my heart in connection with you which has not been one of love. It has not been a fancy, Nelly, for your fair face—though that is beautiful enough to turn the head of a wiser man; but I know you altogether, how fair and pure you are; and, darling, I worship you.'

'Raymond, I cannot listen to this: I cannot bear to hear it. You are paining me more than words can express.'

'It will be soon over, Nelly, once and for all; have patience with me. I was just speaking of my birthday; when that day arrives I shall be twenty-one, when men are their own masters.'

'Some men,' said Nelly quietly; 'not you, Raymond.'

'You mean that I shall be still dependent on my father. That will be so, I admit. But I have thews and sinews, and wits like other men, who have no other inheritance. I am taking, you see, the most unfavourable view of my own prospects.'

'You are right so far, Raymond, for it is the correct one,' answered the girl gravely. 'If you went counter to your father's wishes, you would have your thews, and sinews, and wits wherewith to support yourself, and that would be all.'

'You would be afraid, then, to trust to those, if those were all I had to offer?'

'It is unnecessary to discuss that question, Raymond,' said Nelly, with a touch of dignity and even a tinge of scorn. 'No woman, worthy of the name, would permit a man to beggar himself for her sake.'

'But if I got my father's permission to ask you to be my wife?'

'That is another question which need not be discussed; you know, as well as I do, that you would never get it.'

'At all events, let me try to get it. I will write by this next mail to him, and tell him how dearly I love you; how my hopes of happiness are centred in you alone; how little we should require—you and I—to live upon. I will appeal to him by the friendship he bears your father; by the affection that he owes to me, his only son. I will say—'

'Is it possible that you can be so mad, Raymond, knowing what your father is?' interrupted the girl impetuously. 'You would have bitter cause to repent such folly, and might even find repentance itself too late.'

'My father is a hard man, you think, but he is surely human.'

answered Raymond bitterly. 'It is your mother who has set you against him so.'

'I am not set against him, Raymond; but I am resolute to see things as they are.'

'Do you mean to say that you will not permit me to tell him that you have consented to be my wife?'

'I do mean to say that.'

'Great Heaven! then you do not love me?' He literally staggered back as from a physical blow: his face was white with the whiteness of despair; his eyes had the pained look which comes into those of some loving animal whom its master chides. Yet it was not in tones of pity, but of pure indignation, that the girl replied:

'It is cruel of you, Raymond, to put me to the question thus. What can it avail you to wring such a confession from me? Is it manly to endeavour to do so from any woman who cannot be your wife? Do you wish to make a boast of me as one among the many girls that you might have wedded if you wished?'

'Oh, Nelly, Nelly, who is cruel now?'

'I am sorry, very sorry, Raymond; I did not mean to be cruel. But there are some things—you don't understand what a girl's heart is. No; I can't let you tell your father that I will marry you, if he will graciously permit it. We Conways are very poor, but we are proud. I also have a father, not rich like yours, but whose good opinion is worth much to me; and I know how he would feel upon this subject. Mr. Pennicwick and he are, it is true, old friends; but it is an unequal friendship, Raymond. It is not one of those, I mean, which knows on one side nothing of favour, and on the other nothing of obligation. Such a proposition as you have in your mind would be its death-blow. The bond between our fathers is not, as I have said, so very strong, yet each is to the other the best friend he has. Have you the right to sunder them?'

'I never looked upon the matter in that light, Nelly,' answered the young man dejectedly. 'I was only thinking of myself, I own.'

'There you do yourself injustice, Raymond; for you were thinking of both of us.'

'When I said "myself," I implied that, Nelly,' answered he simply: 'I never think of myself without thinking of you. However, I will not pain you further. Since you refuse me permission to add your entreaties to mine—alas, I have annoyed you again!—I meant to say, since you forbid me to urge your own consent as an argument in my behalf, I must do my best to move my father without it.'

She shook her head and smiled sadly.

‘You are not angry with me, Nelly?’

‘No, Raymond; but I am very, very sorry. We were so happy together as brother and sister——’

‘And so we shall be still,’ put in Raymond eagerly. ‘If my father consents, all will be well; and if he refuses, matters will be no worse than they have been. Do you think, after what you have said, that I shall persecute you with my importunities? Indeed, I never will. There, that is a bargain.’

‘With all my heart,’ said Nelly.

‘Nay, don’t say *that*. Only it’s a bargain; and when bargains are struck at Lincoln’s Inn, Nelly, there is a form of ratification’—a little arbour stood at the extremity of the lawn, and behind it ran the path; they had reached the spot where this arbour intervened between them and the house, and shut them out from observation—‘we cannot sign it here, but we can seal it. Witness my act and deed.’ He stooped down and kissed her cheek, which was pale and cold. ‘The other party to the contract doesthesameat Lincoln’s Inn.’

‘No, Raymond.’

The touch of his lips had been too much for her; she could not trust herself to kiss him in return, lest she should have thrown her arms round his neck and clung there. She had seemed cold and prudent, but it had been only for his sake; for in truth she loved him, and with a fervour undreamt of by himself, though, as we have seen, he had taken her love for granted. If he had known what was passing through her mind—or rather, what was *not* passing, for it had its dwelling there—he might perhaps have scattered all her resolution to the wind. But he was young, and a woman’s heart is only read by man after years of study, and rarely, even then, aright. If her mother had seen her at that moment, she would have made a shrewder guess how matters stood with her. Perhaps it was maternal instinct that brought her at this juncture to the top of the stone steps, with the news that lunch was on the table.

‘Come in at once, young people,’ cried she authoritatively. ‘I have got a sweetbread for you, Raymond,’ added she, as they drew near, ‘because you’re a good boy. He has been good, has he not, Nelly?’ for her quick eye at once detected that there was something amiss. ‘You have not been quarrelling?’

‘No, mamma; we have only had a difference of opinion. Raymond has been good enough, but not very wise.’

‘Well, one can’t expect everything in a man, my dear: for my part—from what I’ve seen of them—I should be glad to compound for goodness.’

‘You pay me but a doubtful compliment,’ laughed Raymond, ‘and even that at the expense of my sex.’

‘Nothing is ever done at their expense,’ replied Mrs. Conway tartly. ‘It is we poor women who have to pay for everything—and especially for compliments.’

CHAPTER VIII.

MOTHER AND DAUGHTER.

It could not be said of Mrs. Conway, as it has been laid down of women in general, that she was ‘variable,’ and not to be depended upon; for her temper was of that character that nobody ever thought of trusting to it. It was bad, and always bad; and showed itself in its worse colours upon the topic of sovereign man, against whom she was in a chronic state of rebellion. To her daughter, however, she was almost always kind; and there was one exception to her general antagonism to the other sex in favour of Raymond Pennicuck. She would abuse him, as we have seen, even behind his back, but she had in reality a very genuine affection for him, as indeed was natural enough, for she had nourished and tended him when a forlorn and forsaken child; and when he grew up he had shown himself not ungrateful. He was the only man that could ‘put up’ with her humours and caprices, and not even solace himself for his forbearance by making fun of them. It annoyed him to hear his father speak of her, as he often did, as ‘that infernal woman;’ though he was much too wise to advance any arguments in her favour, the only effect of which would have been to intensify the other’s ungenerous epithets. When he had occasionally expressed his sense of Mrs. Conway’s kindness towards himself, Ralph Pennicuck had answered with a sneer equal to a folio.

That there was no love lost between them was notorious; and it was even whispered that Ralph had given a helping hand to widen the breach between Conway and ‘the woman that owned him,’ as his friend called her. But the reason of this exceeding dislike was known to none except themselves; the world at large only knew that it was reciprocal. Even Nelly could not understand how it was that her mother had not only no good word for her father’s friend, but rarely mentioned him without contempt or abhorrence. If he had really come between her father and mother, and separated them, that of course was cause enough to explain anything; but she did not believe this to be the case. The friendship between the two men was not, in her opinion, sufficiently strong to have effected this. Her mother’s dislike of the elder Pennicuck

was something quite extraordinary, and would sometimes even cause her to fly out at Raymond. 'What's bred in the bone,' she would say, 'will come out in the flesh. The son of such a man as that must inherit some evil taint, depend upon it. He can't belong to his mother only.'

Raymond's mother had died, as we have said, within a year of her marriage; but not before she had made friends of all her husband's friends, and even of some of his enemies. She was a gentle, quiet creature, as timid as a gazelle, and who filled all who beheld her with love and pity. Perhaps it was more pity than love that moved Mrs. Conway's heart towards her; pity, while alive, because she had married such a heartless wretch as she believed Ralph Pennicuck to be; and pity, after her death, because his harshness and wickedness had been the cause of it. This was not literally true, but where is the woman who hates that is rigidly particular to stick to truth in her denunciations? Unfortunately for Raymond, so far as Mrs. Conway was concerned, he was physically like his father, and this aroused her acrimony; but upon the whole, as has been seen, he was a favourite with her. It puzzled outside people a good deal as to whether she was throwing her daughter at Raymond Pennicuck's head or not. Of course that would seem probable. He was the son and heir of a rich man, who, though only of middle age and of an iron constitution, was given to adventure and travel. He might be struck down by yellow fever in the West Indies, or by a tiger in the East; or might be 'scraped to death with oyster-shells among the Caribbees,' at any time. His long absences in foreign parts gave her many opportunities of bringing the young people together, and she seemed to avail herself of them. But, on the other hand, it was not the way to win the good graces of the young man to speak so bitterly against his father, not indeed in his presence, but so openly that he could hardly fail to be aware of it. It puzzled Nelly herself to reconcile these inconsistencies in her mother's conduct, though the matchmaking part of the matter never crossed her mind. The very topic of China, necessarily a familiar one since her father had been there so long, was now distressing to her when Raymond and her mother were present, since it naturally suggested *his* father, who had gone out some six months back to join his friend. She was always fearing an explosion; and the more so because Raymond seemed to have so little apprehension of it, and would chat about mandarins, and dragons, and pigtails, with the nonchalance of an Irishman who smokes his pipe while sitting on a powder-barrel.

'You heard from the "Flowery Land" last mail, of course,

Mrs. Conway?' observed he, after having done full justice to the sweetbread and the cold lamb.

'My daughter had a letter,' answered the lady frigidly.

'The captain is well, I hope?'

'He seemed to be the same as usual.'

'I concluded as much from my father's silence upon the point.' Mrs. Conway gave a short laugh, which, if translated, would have said, 'You are quite wrong there. If his friend had been dead, he would not have given himself the trouble to mention it.'

'My governor's letters,' continued the young man, turning to Nelly, 'are of the same length as those I used to write to your mother from my first school.' "My dear Mrs. Conway,—I hope you are very well. I have a new top. It is three weeks and two days to the holidays. Believe me to be yours affectionately, Raymond Pennicuck." I dare say she remembers the style.'

'I have no need to tax my memory, my dear boy, for I have got the letters,' observed Mrs. Conway.

'What! the school ones?'

'All that you ever wrote to me. It is quite a little collection of love-letters—and the only one I have.'

This was an example of Mrs. Conway's embarrassing way. When she was to all appearance in high good humour, nay, even tender and affectionate, she would all of a sudden burst out into complaint and denunciation. Her last remark implied, of course, that her husband never wrote to her with affection.

'And how does Mr. Pennicuck like China?' inquired Nelly hurriedly, the disagreement between her parents being always a most painful theme to her.

'Oh, he doesn't say much about it. He had only just arrived in "the crockery shop," as he calls it; and he doesn't go in for descriptions. But for the postmark, his letter might have come from his own chambers in the Albany.'

'That is so different from papa. He gives us a picture—sometimes a real picture, but always a word-painting—of where he is, and all about him.'

'Don't say "us," Nelly, I beg,' interposed Mrs. Conway stiffly; 'he writes very fully to *you*.'

'Nay, he means the letter to do for both of us, mamma,' answered the girl; 'for what is mine of course is yours. He goes into such detail (but always interesting, you know, because everything in China is so queer and strange), that we can imagine exactly how he lives, and who are his friends and neighbours. In his last budget, there was a good deal about Mr. Pennicuck, who had just arrived. They were going together up the country—into

the heart of it—in a sort of barge, and were anticipating ever so much fun.'

'My governor only wrote,' said Raymond: "We are going right through the shop" (that is, the crockery shop); and spoke of his seven friends that were to accompany him, namely, his revolver (which has six barrels) and your father.'

'Dear me! I hope they will have no need of revolvers,' exclaimed Nelly with agitation. 'I thought the Chinese had become quite friendly to us.'

'So they have,' answered Raymond quickly. 'There is no sort of danger to mere tourists and pleasure-seekers. But my father never travels without his revolver; carries it about with him all day like a pocket-handkerchief, and puts it under his pillow at night, like a Dent's repeater.'

'If I were he, I should be always afraid of its going off,' said Nelly with a little shudder.

'Nay, rather, it is other people who are always afraid of its going off,' observed her mother grimly.

'Just so,' remarked Raymond, laughing; 'and it makes him very much respected, he says, in foreign parts. That reminds me, by-the-by, that I must be going off myself, having promised some men to pull up to Hampton Court at three.'

Perhaps he would not have been so careful to keep that appointment had his interview with Nelly ended differently. It would have been much pleasanter than rowing—or even steering—to have wandered about Richmond Park with her, with his arm in hers, or perhaps occasionally round her dainty waist, as an engaged couple. He was as resolute as ever to win her for his wife, but for the present it seemed they were still to remain brother and sister; and after what had just passed between them—just at first—that connection was a little embarrassing, notwithstanding he had said that 'matters would be no worse than they had been.' Matters were already worse, or at all events quite different; and, though he was neither chilled nor piqued, he felt that for that afternoon, at least, he had better go elsewhere. Nelly understood his feelings, though perhaps she gave him credit for a little annoyance, for her manner at parting was doubly kind.

'You will come again on Saturday, Ray'—she had not so abbreviated his name since as boy and girl together they had been 'Ray' and 'Nell,' which had been objected to by the authorities as they grew up as too suggestive of 'So ho,' and 'Down charge.' It was tender, and at the same time it implied the old relations, when their thoughts of marriage were limited to the gorgeous nuptials of princes and princesses in fairy tales.

'Oh, yes, I will certainly come,' said Raymond.

‘And then, if there is lamb, there shall be mint sauce, I promise you,’ observed Mrs. Conway. ‘Of course you will say you didn’t miss it; but man is man, and one must consider his palate——What was the matter with him, Nelly? Why did he go?’

She put this question when he had gaily taken leave of them and left the house.

‘He had an appointment——’

‘Pshaw! I mean, what was his real reason? You said he had not been wise in what he had been speaking about in the garden; that you had had some difference of opinion; what was it?’

‘Mamma,’ answered Nelly, blushing violently, ‘Raymond asked me to be his wife.’

A gleam of triumph lit up the elder lady’s face. ‘Indeed!’ cried she; ‘I should not have thought he had had the courage. I mean, of course, because of his tyrant father. And when is it to be?’

‘Oh, mamma, how can you ask such a question? He wished to marry me as soon as he came of age, and should be what he called his own master; as if that could ever be while Mr. Pennicuick is alive. I convinced him of the madness of such a project, and then he pressed me to give my promise in case his father should consent——’

‘It was you who were mad, not he,’ interrupted Mrs. Conway angrily. ‘Do you suppose his father would do anything of the sort? Don’t you know he is a brute, a miser, a man that has never had any feeling but for himself, nor a single thought beyond the gratification of his own wishes! Don’t you know that he stints the lad even as it is; that his only idea connected with him is to get him off his hands, to see him provided for by some rich marriage! You didn’t surely demean yourself by an acceptance conditional on such a contingency?’

‘I did not demean myself, mamma, I hope, in any way,’ answered the girl, drawing up her fairy form to almost womanly height. ‘I told him that such a proposition was out of the question, and not to be discussed; that my consent was not to be alluded to in any communication he might make to Mr. Pennicuick, and that I strongly disapproved of any such communication at all. I represented to him that it would annoy my father as much as it would enrage his own, and probably cause a breach in the friendship that had so long existed between them.’

‘Tut tut! *that* is no matter. But you were right enough not to compromise yourself. He will be twenty-one—yes—on June 4th. I ought to know it, for it was the death-day of his poor mother.’

‘Mamma, you cannot be serious!’

‘I am quite serious; it is you who seem to be playing the fool. I thought you loved this Raymond Pennicuick.’

‘I do love him,’ answered the girl, with a deep blush, but in firm and confident tones. ‘I love him too well to allow him to become a beggar for my sake.’

‘The sacrifice would not have been so great,’ observed Mrs. Conway drily. ‘He will have three hundred pounds a year of his own, out of his mother’s money, when he comes of age; in fact, the very sum that his father allows him now. It was fixed at that amount, no doubt, that when the young man came into his own the elder should not feel the loss of the income.’

‘I don’t think Raymond can be aware of this,’ said Nelly thoughtfully; ‘are you *sure*, mamma?’

‘Oh, yes, I am quite sure; though Raymond, as you say, knows nothing about it. It is so like his father to make him think as long as possible that he is entirely dependent upon him. I would have told him long ago myself, but that I thought it better not to do so, for his own sake. Now, however, I will tell him.’

She seated herself at a little writing-table and opened her desk.

‘Mamma, I beg of you not to do so. If you tell him this, he will do something rash.’

‘He would be down to-morrow morning, no doubt, if you call *that* rash.’

‘Well, I don’t want him here to-morrow morning. The three hundred a year, which will make such a difference to him, makes none to me. He shall never be disinherited on my account; I swear it. Don’t you see that the knowledge of this comparative independence would make him bolder as respects his father, and he would write—what he says he means to write—in a less filial spirit? Then there would be a quarrel between Mr. Pennicuck and his son on my account.’

‘Yes, I see all that. It would have the effect of opening the lad’s eyes to his father’s character, which must happen sooner or later; a little sooner, well, why not?’

‘Because chiefly, or at all events for one thing, there would not only be a quarrel, but Raymond would be the sufferer. I will no more be the cause of his being disinherited than of his being beggared. The effect of your telling him what you propose would be but to give him false hopes and to make him importunate. I hope, dear mamma, you will respect my wishes.’

‘Why shouldn’t the poor boy know what belongs to him?’ inquired Mrs. Conway in a tone of irritation.

‘Nay, he has only three months to wait; and since you have concealed the intelligence from him so long, why divulge it now? Besides, there may be some mistake; your authority may have deceived you.’

‘He certainly would have, if there had been anything to gain by deceiving me, for it was Ralph Pennicuick himself.’

‘What! Did Mr. Pennicuick make you his confidant, mamma?’

‘Oh, yes: when little Raymond was in my charge, matters were very different,’ observed Mrs. Conway drily.

‘But you never liked Mr. Pennicuick even then, did you?’

‘Never. And I hate him now more than ever,’ added she with vehemence, ‘because he stands between my daughter and her happiness. Why is it that such men live on, and prosper? I never hear those words in the Litany, “From plague, pestilence, and famine, from battle, murder, and sudden death,” without wondering which evil fate will overtake him. It must be so at some time, surely. Let us hope he will meet with his deserts in China, where men, they say, are hard and cruel—like himself.’

‘Oh, mamma, mamma!’ cried Nelly, appalled by the passionate violence of her mother’s manner even more than by her words, ‘do not talk like that, lest you bring some judgment down upon ourselves. Think if anything should happen to dear papa instead.’

‘There is Mrs. Wardlaw coming down the road,’ returned the elder lady, who was seated by the window; ‘she intends, no doubt, to call upon us. Pray go upstairs, and wash away those tears.’

Mrs. Conway’s manner had become indifferent at once at the mention of her husband; the topic had always a chilling, nay, a refrigerating effect upon her; so much so, indeed, that Nelly sometimes thought or hoped that it was to some extent exaggerated and artificial; that the coldness between her parents was not quite so intense as one of them at least would have it to be believed. To-day, above all days, in which it had lain in her power to have won a husband for herself had she been so minded, did the sense of this estrangement between her father and mother cause Nelly an especial pain. It seemed more shocking even than at other times that such a state of things could ever come about between man and wife; they had been lovers once, she knew, in days when they were young; but the days were gone by for ever, and their love, it seemed, likewise. It was very, very sad; so sad, that ere she could wash away her tears, as directed, others came; and it was many minutes before she could present herself in the little drawing-room with the bright face and the sunny smile that were as fit and proper a welcome for good Mrs. Wardlaw as a salute of twenty-one guns is for crowned heads.

(To be continued.)









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